

INVESTIGATE "THE CABAL" ■ WHERE ARE THE WEAPONS?

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The American Conservative

Iraq: The Mess We Made

By Peter Hitchens

Ledeen's Fascist Link

Johnny Cash's Comeback

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Traditional Catholicism Is Back

Since the 1960s, Catholicism in America has experimented with religious liberalism, and the results are in: Two out of three Catholics don't believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The number of priests, brothers, sisters, Catholic schools, seminaries, baptisms, marriages, and conversions has declined — dramatically in certain cases. And weekly church attendance has dropped from 70% to 25%. Catholic liberalism has been a monumental flop. Of course Father Flapdoodle, Sister Snakebite, and Bishop Bubbles haven't figured that out — they think the 60s never ended. Still trying to be cool cats, they're so cool they're frozen in a time warp.

But, mercifully, God's frozen people are thawing out. Where's the fire and dynamism in the Church today? Among traditional Catholics! The dioceses that have no vocations shortage, the religious orders that are growing, and the seminaries that are packed are predominantly the traditional ones. And traditional Catholics have been founding new colleges and seminaries.

Polls show that the Catholics most committed to the Church are traditional Catholics. Seminarians and younger priests are much more traditional than middle-aged and older priests. The only novel idea in Catholic education is home-schooling, spearheaded by traditional Catholics. The only massive grassroots movement in the Church is the prolife movement, led by traditional Catholics. The only significant Catholic presence on TV is the ardently traditional EWTN. The only significant Catholic voice on ra-

dio is that of traditional Catholics.

In Catholic journalism, guess what's coming at you hot off the presses? Orthodoxy! And who blazed that trail? We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW did. As Fr. Joseph Fessio said recently, "Since the NEW OXFORD REVIEW began...I can count 19 new [orthodox] Catholic magazines." We were founded in 1977 as an orthodox Anglo-Catholic magazine, taking our name from the 19th-century Oxford Movement, and we immediately championed Pope John Paul II when he cracked down on dissenting theologian

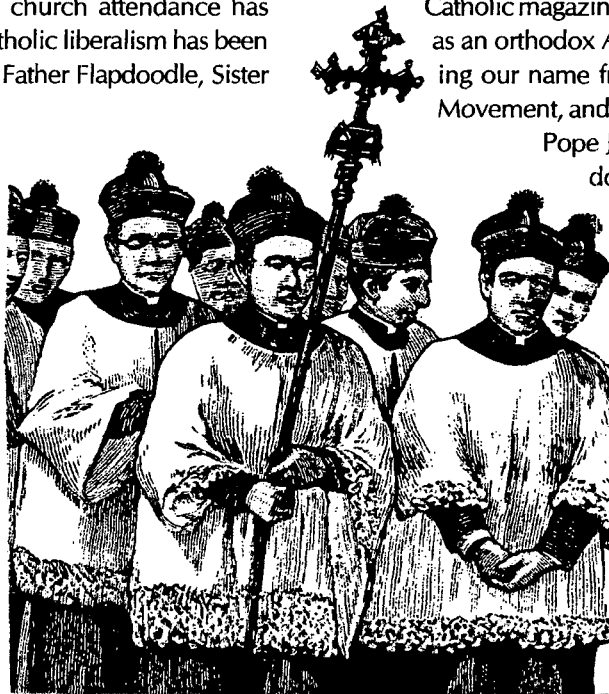
Hans Küng, although no leading Roman Catholic magazine was willing to do so. The novelty of Anglicans supporting a muscular Pope attracted the attention of *Newsweek*, which did a story on us and predicted that we would, like John Henry Newman of Oxford Movement fame, become *Roman Catholic*, which we did in 1983.

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blazing the trail — with "attitude" (as Karl Keating says) and "cheek" (as *Newsweek* noted). And we're unusually cheap (see below).

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[DIPLOMACY]

ROCKY ROAD MAP

Just one week ago, the sight of President Bush, Jordan's King Abdullah, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, and Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas standing together before the resplendent backdrop of Jordan's Gulf of Aqaba convinced us that a new wind might be blowing.

Sharon declared that he understood the desire for "contiguity" in the intended Palestinian state—an assertion that seemed to acknowledge that a Bantustan arrangement for the Palestinians, criss-crossed by "Israelis only" highways, was not realistic. Abbas unambiguously rejected terror as a Palestinian tactic. And President Bush seemed to have focused the same stubborn single-mindedness he displayed in pursuit of war against Iraq to pushing a just Israeli/Palestinian peace.

But a week later, Aqaba's hopeful headlines have given way to news of "spiraling violence" and "all-out war." In the region's deadliest days in nearly three years, Hamas broadcast its rejection of diplomacy through strikes on Israeli soldiers in the occupied territories and a series of suicide bombings. Israel answered with assassination attempts on Hamas's leaders culminating in a public radio announcement to "completely wipe out" Hamas. The militants shot back a call for "all military cells to act immediately to blow up the Zionist entity" as the cycle of vengeance reached full tilt and the road map's prospects grew ever dim.

For his failure to rein in Hamas, Sharon dismissed Abbas as "A chick that hasn't grown its feathers yet," giving Yasser Arafat, who has been sidelined in the peace talks, room to re-emerge, issuing calls for a Palestinian ceasefire. For his part, President Bush condemned both the Israeli helicopter strikes that resulted in civilian casualties and Hamas's bombing



that killed 16 Israelis on a bus on Jerusalem's busiest street.

With neither side ready to foreswear ongoing violence, the president cannot force peace. But the road map's opponents—within Palestinian ranks, within Sharon's government, and within the Bush administration itself—should not underestimate his resolve. The rubble of a bloody week makes his road map more necessary than ever, and this is a man singularly capable of setting and staying his course.

The coming days will be decisive. Unresolved, the conflict is an open and suppurating wound, spreading poison throughout the Middle East, generating hatred for the United States, and inflicting enormous suffering on both Israelis and Palestinians. Peace, while further from possibility, is more vital than ever, and we stand with the president in pressing his noble goal.

[JUSTICE]

A TIME FOR DEPORTATION

"The Sept. 11 terror attacks not only turned the nation upside down, but they also inverted the foundation principles of the American legal system." With such tabloid-style melodrama the *New York Times* began its story on a Justice Department inspector general's report critical of the government's incarceration of immigrants after 9/11. But was our legal system—one of the rarest treasures

of our civilization—really so upended?

It seems that 762 people were rounded up but only one, Zacharias Mousaoui, was ever charged with connection to terrorism. The report further alleges that they were denied the presumption of innocence, the right to counsel, and *habeas corpus* protections.

If the prisoners had been citizens, these accusations would be troubling. The Constitution, however, enshrines not the universal Rights of Man but the particular ones We the People have claimed. The *Times* says all arrested in the post-9/11 sweep were "held on minor immigration violations," later defined to include overstaying visas. Minor? Recall: three of the hijackers had done just that.

The *Times* article continues: "The government used every procedural device at its disposal . . . to ensure that people charged with immigration violations in connection with the attacks were not released until the Federal Bureau of Investigation 'determined they posed no danger to the United States.'" To almost anyone but the "paper of record," that might sound sensible. Indeed, the inspector general's report does not accuse Justice of illegal conduct, and the department insists that it acted zealously, but by the law.

Those locked up were entitled only to deportation and basic decency of treatment. Disturbingly, the report—which

documents cases of physical abuse—indicates they didn't always receive the latter. Such blanket round-ups, and even a degree of mistreatment, are foreseeable consequences of open borders. It is simply beyond the power of any tolerably small government to make fine distinctions among the millions who come to this country without applying through the INS. Avoiding a repeat of 9/11 will require a foreign policy that doesn't generate such violent hatred of America among Muslims both here and abroad, but it will also require us to regain control of our borders.

[CULTURE]

ROE WILL BE MOOT

The pro-life cause advanced last week not only by successful legislation but in a tectonic shift of presuppositions heralded by *Newsweek's* June 9 cover. Stepping beyond the *Roe* wars, the magazine—circulation 3.2 million—reported that technological advance, state initiative, and most recently, the death of Laci Peterson's child—a fetus with a name—have changed the dynamics of the abortion debate. Implicit in *Newsweek's* discussion of the moral complexities fogging embryonic adoption, stem-cell research, and fetal surgery was the suggestion of personhood. "Once just grainy blobs on a TV monitor, new high-tech fetal ultrasound images allow prospective parents to see tiny fingers and toes, arms, legs and a beating heart as early as 12 weeks," Debra Rosenberg writes. "[T]hese images ... pack such an emotional punch that even the most hard-line abortion-rights supporters may find themselves questioning their beliefs."

"If they are able to make fetuses people in law with the same standing as women and men, then *Roe* will be moot," admits Planned Parenthood president Gloria Feldt. Congress, in taking action on the Unborn Victims of Violence

Act, is moving in that direction. Likewise the prosecutors in the Peterson case. And now *Newsweek*. In a companion to its cover piece, the magazine caught up with Samuel Armas, whose 21-week-old hand was memorably photographed reaching from his mother's womb during *in utero* surgery to repair his *spina bifida*. He is now three years old and making progress thanks to an operation that recognized his fetal self as human.

After a 30-year sojourn in the political wilderness, the pro-life movement is adding legal and scientific momentum to its moral case. The battle is far from won, but its contours are changing, as, for the first time in a long time, a majority believes that life begins at conception and the country's second largest news magazine is willing to publish proof.

[IMMIGRATION]

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Summer's steamy onset has caused California to declare a power emergency—bad news for locals but a welcome development for northern Mexico. Along the border, 22 new plants are being built to supply California's booming energy needs. In return for U.S. natural gas pumped south, the Mexican companies will send electricity north—enough to light one million homes. Profiteers claim win/win: just one new power plan means 1,100 Mexican jobs, and California will keep blazing bright. But their northern neighbors aren't so sure. Smog from Mexico's unregulated factories already sweeps across the border, and new plants that fall short of American emissions standards could mean more harm than help. But the environmental complaint misses a critical factor in the energy equation: California's problems with power supply can't be separated from its people supply—a migration Mexico set in motion and now expects to capitalize on. ■

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Investigate "The Cabal"

With the same sort of not-really-joking semi-ironic hubris that inspires some gay activists to call themselves "queer," the boys in Donald Rumsfeld's Pentagon intelligence-

cooking shop called themselves "The Cabal." And why shouldn't this group strut a little? Some had previously written strategy memos for Israeli ultra-hardliner Benjamin Netanyahu on how to scuttle the Oslo peace process—and, astonishingly, this administration did not view this an impediment to working in highly sensitive Pentagon positions. Others had doggedly and persistently lobbied for a war between the United States and Iraq long before 9/11.

The so-called "cabal"—or, more formally, the Office of Special Plans (OSP)—was conceived by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz after 9/11. Directed by Likud advisor and Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith, the small group set out to challenge the intelligence conclusions of the CIA and the Pentagon's own Defense Intelligence Agency, to cast doubt on the work of the country's intelligence professionals. The OSP provided an alternate data stream that the top Pentagon civilians committed to war against Iraq—Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz—would pick at, using it to undermine the CIA's conclusions. As Rumsfeld noted in an October briefing, when the CIA found no verifiable Iraqi link to 9/11, he could say, "What about this?" or "Have you considered that?" And when CIA analysis concluded that Iraq no longer had biological or chemical weapons—well, here was information that might point to a different conclusion.

In charge of the OSP was Abram Shulsky, a former Henry Jackson aide and colleague of Richard Perle, and Undersecretary of Defense William Luti. The

tidbits of information they used came generally from Iraqi defectors, chiefly from the group around the Iraqi National Congress's Ahmed Chalabi, the convicted embezzler whom the neocons seek to install as prince of the new Iraq.

Intelligence professionals consider defectors and exiles potentially useful but notoriously unreliable sources of information, for they have an understandable penchant for telling their interrogators (and financial backers) both what they want to hear and what serves the defectors' own political interests. And no group was more committed to an American invasion of Iraq than the Iraqi exiles.

A stronger CIA chief than George Tenet might have forcefully opposed the OSP and better defended the conclusions of the CIA's own analysts. But as it happened, Tenet did not. As one Pentagon staffer friendly to the OSP boasted to the *New Yorker's* Seymour Hersh after the war had begun, "Shulsky and Luti won the policy debate—they cleaned up against State and the CIA. They won ... because they were more effective at making their argument. Luti is smarter than the opposition. Wolfowitz is smarter. They persuaded the President of the need to make a new security policy."

More precisely, they persuaded President Bush that Iraq had a large and combat-ready arsenal of biological and chemical weapons, and the president repeated this story again and again to the American people.

We are now approaching the three-month mark since U.S. troops entered

Baghdad. Chemical or biological weapons may well be discovered one day. But it is clear that the administration simply did not have the kind of detailed knowledge of Saddam's weapons programs that it claimed during the build-up to war. Those claims, put forward with such assurance by several administration officials, were based on a foundation of falsehood. Weapons of mass destruction were the pretext for war most acceptable to the foreign affairs bureaucracy, as Paul Wolfowitz later explained.

Many Americans do not seem too concerned yet by the failure to find the weapons of whose existence the administration seemed so sure. Of course, if the occupation of Iraq continues to sour, more will ask how and why the war was started. President Bush's principal ally, Tony Blair, may fall from power in Britain as a result of the false claims he made about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. While the president does not face that danger, he cannot lead the country in a time of tremendous international tension without confidence in the intelligence information he receives.

The Senate Intelligence Committee now plans to hold closed-door hearings into compromised intelligence. Scrutiny has so far centered on the CIA, State Department, and White House, but to succeed the congressional probe must extend to the OSP, and include all necessary documents and witnesses. It is clear that the president needs the best intelligence he can possibly receive—and just as plainly, he did not get that kind of intelligence prior to the war in Iraq. Indeed he seems to have made crucial foreign policy decisions based on information generated by Iraqi exiles and neocon warmongers operating with their private agendas. ■

WMDs Gone MLA

What was America's real motive for attacking Iraq? Was it oil? Empire? To make the Middle East safe for Sharon? That these questions are being asked, not only

by America's critics, is the fault of the administration alone. For its crucial argument as to why it had no choice but to launch the first preventive war in American history is collapsing like a sand castle in a rising surf.

Iraq, in retrospect, was no threat whatsoever to the United States. We fought an unnecessary war, and now we must rebuild a nation at a rising cost in blood and treasure.

Before the war, many who opposed it argued that no matter the evil character of Saddam, Iraq had not attacked us, did not threaten us, did not want war with us, could not defeat us. Why then were we about to invade Iraq?

Came the administration answer: Saddam has ties to al-Qaeda. He has an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. He is a year or so away from being able to build a nuclear bomb, and he will use these weapons on us or our allies, or give them to terrorists who will use them in the United States. And these weapons will kill not just the 3,000 who perished on Sept. 11, but tens and even hundreds of thousands of innocent Americans. Do you want to risk that? Do you want to do nothing and risk a "mushroom cloud" in an American city? Or do you want to remove this mortal threat now? So went the clinching argument for war.

Opponents answered that the UN inspectors had found nothing, that Saddam had even invited in the CIA to have a look, that surely he could not launch a sneak attack on America or her allies with UN inspectors rummaging around

his country. The War Party scoffed. Hans Blix, they said, was an incompetent and an appeaser who would deliberately not find weapons rather than be responsible for causing a war.

So President Bush launched America's first pre-emptive war, and it was a triumph of American arms. But nearly three months have now elapsed, and we have not yet found a single weapon of mass destruction, though we were told, again and again, that Saddam had "30,000 munitions."

On June 1, the *Washington Post's* Dana Milbank revisited the Bush administration's categorical claims in the run-up to war:

On Aug. 26, 2002, Vice President Cheney told the VFW, "Stated simply, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies and against us."

On Dec. 2, Ari Fleischer told the White House press corps, "You've heard the president say repeatedly that he has chemical and biological weapons." On Jan. 7, 2003, Fleischer added, "We know for a fact that there are weapons there."

Also in January, Rumsfeld declared, "There's no doubt in my mind that they currently have chemical and biological weapons."

In his Feb. 8 radio address, Bush declared, "We have sources that tell us that Saddam recently authorized Iraqi field commanders to use chemical weapons—the very weapons the dictator tells us he does not have."

Cheney added in March, "We believe he has, in fact, reconstituted nuclear weapons."

On March 17, on the eve of war, President Bush told the nation "Intelligence ... leaves no doubt that the Iraqi regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised." So persuaded, America united behind the president and went to war.

Something is terribly wrong here. It is impossible to believe the president would deliberately lie to the nation when he knew the full truth would be discovered at war's end in a few weeks. Either he was misled, or he was deceived, and, so, too, was Secretary of State Colin Powell. Who did it? Who was responsible for the intelligence failure, or the dishonest use of selected intelligence, or the conscious and deliberate deceit of a president and secretary of state?

Where are the weapons? We have searched 300 sites and arms dumps and found not one shell. If Saddam had the weapons, why did he not use them? If he destroyed them before the war, as Rumsfeld now argues, he fulfilled the terms of Resolution 1441 and could have saved himself by showing UN inspectors where and how he did it.

Why would Saddam let himself, his family, and his regime perish protecting weapons he either no longer had or did not intend to use?

Is it possible Iraq never had that vast arsenal of anthrax, VX, sarin, and mustard gas we were led to believe? Did the intelligence agencies fail us, or did someone "cook the books" to meet the recipe for an imperial war? It is time Congress investigated the Office of Special Plans, set up in the Pentagon to sift and interpret all intelligence and placed under neoconservative super-hawk, Paul Wolfowitz. ■

[is it democracy yet?]

The Mess We Made

Iraq's postwar chaos belies optimistic projections.

By Peter Hitchens

WHEN THE GREATEST civilization on earth came to visit Baghdad, it did not bring peace but chaos. The American incursion into Iraq was supposed to be a liberation, and we must all hope that it will one day turn out to be one. But for most people in the Iraqi capital, it has meant a return to Year Zero. Each evening as night falls, the city slides back from the 21st century to the Middle Ages.

This great metropolis has been stripped of almost all the essentials of modern life. By day, it is not quite so obvious. Baghdad looks a little like Moscow in a heat wave, long scruffy concrete boulevards converging on ugly boastful statues. But by night, when the electricity shuts down yet again and there is only moonlight to see by, you understand that the world we think of as normal is built on a very thin crust.

In the festering slums, a firearm provides the only security. Heads of households sit behind their doors, quaking at the sound of gunfire and—if they are lucky enough to have such things—cradling their own weapons. In the suburbs, the middle-class residents are sawing down the palm trees to make barricades in the hope of keeping out organized thieves.

When looters are detected in any district, the besieged householders set off bursts of bullets into the sky to let

marauders know that their district, at least, is defended. Those without weapons must submit or be shot. Iraqis, once one of the most educated, civilized peoples in the Middle East, have gone back to the ways of cavemen. Everything that made Iraq a country has gone. There is no single source of power or law, good or bad. The currency swoops up and down in value, and satchels full of dinars are needed to pay for anything important. In fact, the moneychangers have grown so weary of counting out the scuffed blue-green 250-dinar bills that they sometimes weigh them instead. The frontiers are controlled—to the extent that they are controlled—by foreign troops. Iraqi embassies abroad have no government to represent, and nobody here is authorized to defend their country's interests overseas.

The telephones are dead. Electricity is intermittent and unreliable. The water, tainted with sewage, is not safe to drink. There is no fuel for cooking. And, in the world's second greatest producer of oil, there is little or no gasoline. Drivers wait in line for as much as 24 hours for a rationed half-tankful of noxious semi-refined muck, which stinks the way you imagine political corruption would if you could smell it, and rapidly chokes engines to death. Baghdad is a big place without much in the way of mass-transit, and many simply cannot get to work—if there is any work for them to do.

Many people have not been paid for weeks and have no idea if their old jobs or businesses still exist or will ever reappear. So many records have been destroyed in the bombing of ministries that they may never be able to prove that they were employed or that they are due for payments.

Meanwhile in their guarded, walled compounds—the very places where the Saddam regime once hid from the people—the American rulers of the city

live in air-conditioned comfort. Their electricity never fails, and they ride through the streets in armored convoys, machine-gunners fore and aft glaring suspiciously about them, too scared of the citizens they have liberated to get out, walk, and see for themselves.

If anyone in the U.S. government knew Iraqi history before they decided to take over the country, they were showing no sign of it as I toured Baghdad and the nearby area. Having heard of the Ba'ath Party mere months ago, they now rage righteously against it. A few weeks ago, Gen. Tommy Franks went on the radio and simply dissolved it, the act of a conqueror, not a liberator—and one he has no power to enforce.

Soon afterwards, the second American Viceroy in Baghdad (so far), Paul Bremer, said that he, too, planned to “extirpate” the wicked Ba'ath Party, though one has to wonder how you can extirpate something that has already been dissolved. As it happens, the only thing Mr. Bremer has extirpated is his luckless forerunner, the retired soldier Jay Garner, who had the misfortune to

administration wanted to destroy Saddam but does not want to supplant him as ruler or have any coherent plans for the future of this strategically and politically important nation. This is not liberal imperialism or neo-imperialism, just a gesture with a mainly domestic purpose.

There are many places in Iraq where this is becoming evident, but the classrooms of the schools are a good place to see the nature of the problem. The schools do not know what to teach or how to teach it. The adulation of Saddam Hussein permeated every class and textbook so that math often involved counting tanks, and pictures of Saddam pop up every few pages in even the most innocent volume. Now the children, having been taught to revere Saddam as a beloved father, have suddenly been instructed to rip his portrait from their books and tear it from the walls. Some are reported to have wept. Until now, even their parents had never dared tell them that the man was a monster in case they were inadvertently denounced by their own offspring. The reversal is a distressing shock.

THE CHILDREN, HAVING BEEN TAUGHT TO REVERE SADDAM AS A BELOVED FATHER, HAVE SUDDENLY BEEN INSTRUCTED TO RIP HIS PORTRAIT FROM THEIR BOOKS AND TEAR IT FROM THE WALLS. SOME ARE REPORTED TO HAVE WEPT.

be in charge of Iraq when everything started to go wrong. He was sacked on the old principle that it might encourage the others, but as things stand Mr. Bremer may not be able to do much better.

He suffers, as did Gen. Garner, from the fact that the U.S. is already bored by Iraq's tedious and complex internal problems, which the White House did not foresee because it was interested in a demonstration victory over a cartoon enemy. The evidence from Baghdad suggests strongly that President Bush's

I spoke to Maj. Patrick Vessels, from Indiana, a smart and wise officer who keeps an eye on the schools of Baghdad. If there were more people like him in the U.S. administration of Iraq, I suspect things would be a lot better than they are. He explained the subtle problem the new authorities now face. He told me that the U.S. had to be careful not to replace one dictator with another. “We're not discouraging them from tearing out pictures of Saddam, but we're not dictating it,” he said. “The trouble is that

school heads are used to being dictated to. They are paralyzed when they are given autonomy. They don't know what to do with freedom."

This is, of course, the regrettable truth. Freedom is a risky and unsettling condition of life for those who have not been allowed it and are not used to it, and its proper use has to be learned over time. It cannot simply be exported to every country in the world and distributed in nice parcels. In fact, even the most law-governed and free countries on earth are now having a little trouble handling and preserving their own liberty and are enthusiastically loading themselves with chains on the pretext of defending themselves against terrorism.

It is not that Iraqis yearn for the return of Saddam. Hardly anyone is sorry that he has gone. It is that they recognize—as Washington has yet to—that if you behead a system based upon a single tyrant and his single party, you need to provide an alternative authority immediately. People will not suddenly become accustomed to freedom or able to handle it. Many will take advantage of the confusion. Crime and looting are only the most obvious signs of this.

During my visit to Baghdad, Mr. Bremer was boasting about the increased number of patrols on the streets, the arrests made, and the fact that he had two criminal courts working and had reopened (or should that be reclosed?) two of Baghdad's prisons. But all Iraqis know that the streets are mainly unprotected unless they have some kind of private muscle to guard their premises. And they also know that Mr. Bremer will have to bring back the Ba'athists and the old Saddam machine if he wants to do anything about it.

I went to the Baghdad police academy, where American military policemen and members of Saddam's old police force co-operate nervously and set out on their inadequate joint beats, camou-

flaged Humvees and blue and white squad cars in convoy. They are hampered by the fact that very few American soldiers speak a word of Arabic and also because the two groups do not really trust each other. There I spoke to police Col. Jasim Mohamed, a 15-year veteran of the city force. Yes, he reluctantly admitted, he was a member of the Ba'ath Party, along with two million other Iraqis who had to join if they wanted to get a college education or a decent career. He says, as everybody now has to say, "Of course we are happy Saddam has gone." He adds, as everybody now has to add, "Of course I want democracy."

That day, out of the 30,000 members of the pre-invasion Baghdad police force, only 4,000 had come back to work, and there were 24 patrol cars to cover a city about the size of Chicago. There used to be 2,000. The great extirpator, Mr. Bremer, may have to eat his words about Ba'athists if he wants a police force back in Baghdad before Christmas, as I would guess most of the missing men are Ba'ath Party members. For now, all he has is a ludicrous compromise, explained to me by Capt. Steve Caruso, a forceful soldier from Philadelphia who is actually trying to get the occupation to work and does not look as

forcements who are not exhausted by fighting their way up from Kuwait), do not like the idea of an organized, disciplined force of armed Iraqis in their midst. So as a compromise the Iraqi police are allowed to carry their submachine guns in the trunks of their cars and can only get them out if they are attacked. Since untold numbers of criminals and looters already have such weapons, purchased at arms markets for a few dollars, it is easy to see that this will not do much good. The armed looter is only afraid of an armed law-enforcement officer. Nor will the aggressive but rare American patrols make much difference—especially if they are like the one I saw suddenly pile out of their truck and kick and punch a group of Iraqis to the ground because they suspected them of selling weapons.

The absolute fear of any Iraqis holding arms certainly does not help the pitiful shopkeeper I found at the gate of Saddam Hussein's old palace complex, feebly trying to explain his plight. There is always a knot of people gathered outside the new seat of power, trying to make contact with the occupiers. The shopkeeper, Mahmoud Namdar, had seen his electronic-goods shop plundered by armed thieves and bought his

FREEDOM IS A RISKY AND UNSETTLING CONDITION OF LIFE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN ALLOWED IT AND ARE NOT USED TO IT, AND ITS PROPER USE HAS TO BE LEARNED OVER TIME.

if he is getting much sleep in the process.

"The Iraqi police want to be armed with Kalashnikovs, as they used to be, but handing out 10,000 AK-47s to Iraqi police officers is not the right answer right now," he insisted. Not surprisingly, the inadequate U.S. force in the city (around 15,000 to begin with, but now rising and at last being replaced by rein-

own gun to protect his stock from robbers. But an American patrol happened by, saw him, and took away his weapon, though he has only one leg and cannot even run after those who steal from him. Now he fears he is defenseless and will lose everything.

After my interpreter explained this to a brusque soldier, the sentry said to Mahmoud Namdar, "You will get your

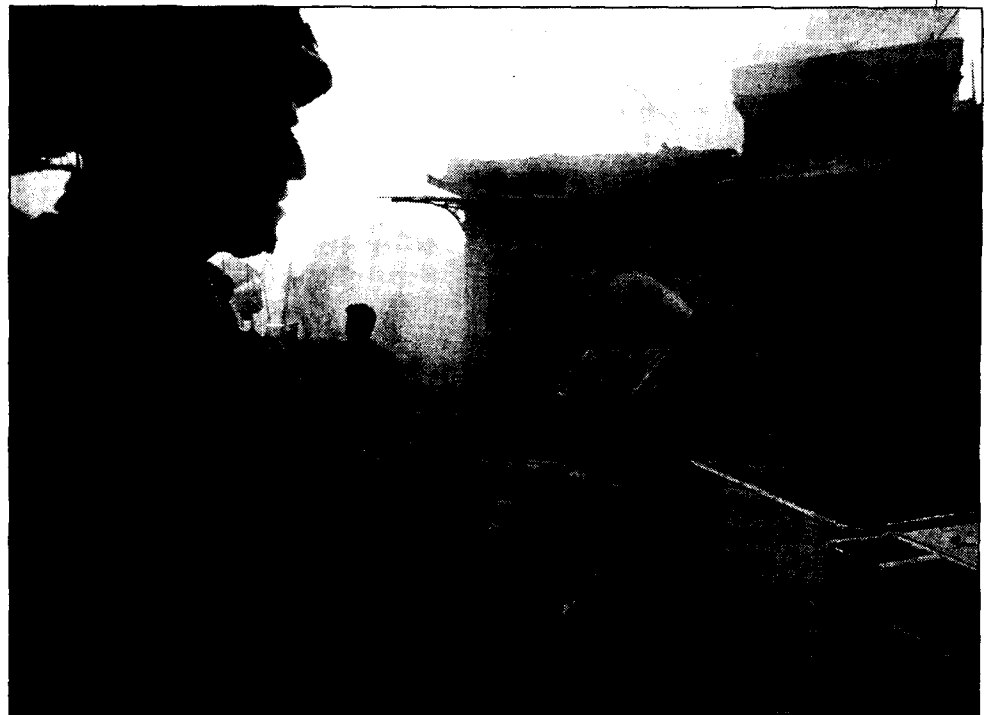
goods back. We will catch the thieves." Then he turned away. As he made this unbelievable promise, he did not even try to find out the man's name or address. I do not particularly blame him. He was exhausted and bored and had never thought that simple guard duty would involve trying to solve the problems of distraught merchants. He probably just wanted to go home.

Many people are already starting to wish the Western armies would do just that. They are glad to be rid of Saddam but have no wish to be occupied and have a growing feeling that they will not have a normal life until the soldiers have gone. In the meantime, they want us to bring back the few certainties they used to have, though it is difficult to see how this can be done, and wonder exactly what authority will take over if the troops do leave.

As I walked through the beautiful holy city of Najaf, a middle-aged man, Nazal Shamsah, stormed up to me to ask—in English—why it was that he could not now get the medicine he badly needs for his heart disease. "We're not your enemies, but your friends, help us, please," he urged. Mr. Shamsah, who like many people in that part of the world still wears the traditional fez, clearly remembers the period when Iraq was in the British sphere of influence. If only others could also remember it.

If the Americans had studied Britain's long-ago experience in Baghdad, they might have learned that democracy cannot simply be unpacked from crates and set up in a place like this. They might have learned that if you take over someone's country you have to use the old institutions and elites even if you do not like them.

When Britain took over the region from the Turks in 1920, she too tried—or at least pretended—to make Iraq a democracy but found things worked better when British officials pulled the strings



of government, working through the local Sunni Muslim upper crust. In 1932, London even pretended that Iraq was independent, when in truth Britain was still effectively in control. Not until the gruesome coup of 1958, which was almost certainly a consequence of Britain's humiliation by Nasser at Suez two years before, did Britain finally lose its influence. Even in the days when London's word was law, British envoys in Baghdad preferred not to be too obvious. The British ambassador once had to tell the King of Iraq to please stop coming to the embassy and instead summon him to the palace so that it at least looked as if the King were really in charge.

The British Empire was also also ruthless about keeping order. When there was looting in Baghdad in 1941, after British troops had overthrown the pro-Nazi dictator Rashid Ali Kailani, the authorities swiftly hanged several looters and restored peace. But these days, while it is all right to bomb innocent people for their own good, it is apparently wrong to hang guilty ones for the general benefit. So the nightly crackle of gunfire continues.

American sloganeering about democracy and liberation also misses the point that most Iraqis are Shi'ite Muslims,

many of whom fervently desire an Islamic republic. What is more, the militant Shi'ites are organized and effective among the urban poor, where their strength is concentrated. I went to the hospital in what used to be Saddam City, a desperate and squalid quarter of Baghdad so wretched that its children make a thin living by scavenging through the stinking rubbish heaps. This scene is next door to the brand new looters' market, where a mad selection of stolen goods, from air-conditioning units and steel cupboards to crutches and wheelchairs, goes on sale each morning amid clouds of flies.

The hospital is a small patch of calm amid this seething, filthy, lawless place because the local Shi'ite clerics have taken it over and set up their own armed militia, which keeps away marauders. And the same thing has happened all over the Shi'ite-dominated south of the country as the clerics have fanned out from their central college in Najaf, bringing authority and order but also something else.

If you speak to them, they will smile and say they have no ambitions to run the country. No, of course they do not want an Islamic republic like Iran. They want a nice democracy where all can

share. This is the official line, laid down by the great Shi'ite leader Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim when he returned after a long exile in Iran last month. So why is there an organization—well funded and competent—called the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq? Does Hakim, who attracts the sort of crowds only rock stars can expect in the West, really mean it when he says his ambitions are modest? I don't think so.

I went to the Shi'ite heartland to see what the unofficial view might be. Outside the majestic golden-domed shrine of Hussein in Karbala, 24-year-old Mohammed Karim told me, "We want Hakim as President of Iraq. We would like to see Islamic law." When he said this should include a ban on alcohol as well as the shrouding of women, most of

prayers as they did so. The roughly made boxes contained the shriveled, pitiful remains of Shi'ites that had just been dug from the mass grave at Muhawil, near the ancient site of Babylon. I had earlier visited this grisly scene. Laid out among the wasteland were the remnants of what had once been hundreds of people: brown bones, hanks of hair, skulls still half-covered in earth, and bits of cloth assembled into shockingly small plastic bags. These piles and bundles had once been Iraqi Shi'ites who followed Western calls to rise against Saddam in 1991, were abandoned by us, massacred by Saddam, and cast, bound and blindfolded, into pits. Some of them, judging from the scraps of synthetic cloth, had obviously been women. Mothers, sisters, and brothers searched

ister Anthony Blair had that day told MPs that this mass grave ought to end the doubts of those who opposed the war.

As one who opposed the war and who has seen the grave, I would say it does no such thing. Those corpses are in any case the result of earlier half-hearted Western meddling in Iraq, and I got the impression the Allies saw them as a useful diversion from the fact that no gas or germ weapons have yet been found. I suspect that such graves or torture chambers or other relics of the Saddam tyranny will be "discovered" every time doubts are raised about weapons of mass destruction. There is no shortage of them. As Samir, my interpreter, said to me, "It used to be said that everywhere you dig in Iraq you will find either oil or antiquities. Now you will find corpses."

I have never seen anywhere like this before and honestly hope I never do again. Everything makes the mind churn at the ghastliness of the past and the uncertainty of the future. Lawless Baghdad yearns for authority to stop crime and restore power, fuel, and water. Poor Muslims turn to their mullahs, who at least offer certainty among the swirling chaos. In the north, Kurds once again hope for a state of their own, even though they know chances are that their hopes will be betrayed as they always have been before.

Back in safety, far from the stuttering AK-47s, the smirking mullahs, the power outages, the teeming mosques, the mass-graves, the strange moonlit cityscape, the stinking fuel, and the poisoned water, I listen to the politicians who got us into this and wonder if they ever understood what they were doing—or if they know how to finish what they have started. ■

Peter Hitchens, a columnist for the London Mail on Sunday, visited Baghdad to see the after-effects of the war. This is what he found.

IN BASRA, CHRISTIAN-RUN ALCOHOL SHOPS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SMASHED UP BY SHI'ITE MILITANTS FLEXING THEIR MUSLIM MUSCLE.

the crowd that had gathered round agreed, though one other young man called out that alcohol should be a matter of choice. He may be in for a disappointment. Farther south, in Basra, Christian-run alcohol shops have already been smashed up by Shi'ite militants flexing their Muslim muscle.

The real agenda of the Shi'ite clerics was revealed by preachers at the Saddam City mosque before Hakim even arrived. They, like young Mohammed Karim, also demanded the head-to-toe veiling of women, the banning of alcohol and—this is incredibly important given the collapse of the Saddam cult—Islamic control of the schools. This would be misery for millions of secular Iraqis and for Sunni Muslims, but democracy could actually bring it about.

As I talked to Karim, worshippers at the ancient shrine were constantly carrying crude coffins in and out, chanting

among these wretched remnants for identity cards or other proof that these were the bodies of their lost loved ones that could now be given decent burial.

Azaar Husain Jasim, hollow-faced and shrouded in black, had found what was left of her murdered brother, Abdullah, including a disintegrating Koran and an army ID card. Now 24, she still remembers the night Saddam's men came for her brother and dragged him away. She was bitter but not emotional, saying only, "We are a land of civilizations and religions, and the monster Saddam came among us. America saved us from him, and I thank America."

America also seemed thankful for the discovery of this site. Just around the corner from the hellish pit and the piles of bones stood a Marine public-affairs officer, quietly and courteously offering help to any journalists who happened to want it. I learned later that Britain's Prime Min-

[trains on time]

Flirting with Fascism

Neocon theorist Michael Ledeen draws more from Italian fascism than from the American Right.

By John Laughland

ON THE ANTIWAR RIGHT, it has been customary to attack the warmongering neoconservative clique for its Trotskyite origins. Certainly, the founding father of neoconservatism, Irving Kristol, wrote in 1983 that he was “proud” to have been a member of the Fourth International in 1940. Other future leading lights of the neocon movement were also initially Trotskyites, like James Burnham and Max Kampelman—the latter a conscientious objector during the war against Hitler, a status that Evron Kirkpatrick, husband of Jeane, used his influence to obtain for him. But there is at least one neoconservative commentator whose personal political odyssey began with a fascination not with Trotskyism, but instead with another famous political movement that grew up in the early decades of the 20th century: fascism. I refer to Michael Ledeen, leading neocon theoretician, expert on Machiavelli, holder of the Freedom Chair at the American Enterprise Institute, regular columnist for *National Review*—and the principal cheerleader today for an extension of the war on terror to include regime change in Iran.

Ledeen has gained notoriety in recent months for the following paragraph in his latest book, *The War Against the Terror Masters*. In what reads like a prophetic approval of the policy of

chaos now being visited on Iraq, Ledeen wrote,

Creative destruction is our middle name, both within our own society and abroad. We tear down the old order every day, from business to science, literature, art, architecture, and cinema to politics and the law. Our enemies have always hated this whirlwind of energy and creativity, which menaces their traditions (whatever they may be) and shames them for their inability to keep pace. Seeing America undo traditional societies, they fear us, for they do not wish to be undone. They cannot feel secure so long as we are there, for our very existence—our existence, not our politics—threatens their legitimacy. They must attack us in order to survive, just as we must destroy them to advance our historic mission.

LEDEEN WROTE, “CREATIVE DESTRUCTION IS OUR MIDDLE NAME, BOTH WITHIN OUR OWN SOCIETY AND ABROAD.”

This is not the first time Ledeen has written eloquently on his love for “the democratic revolution” and “creative destruction.” In 1996, he gave an extend-

ed account of his theory of revolution in his book, *Freedom Betrayed*—the title, one assumes, is a deliberate reference to Trotsky’s *Revolution Betrayed*. Ledeen explains that “America is a revolutionary force” because the American Revolution is the only revolution in history that has succeeded, the French and Russian revolutions having quickly collapsed into terror. Consequently, “[O]ur revolutionary values are part of our genetic make-up. ... We drive the revolution because of what we represent: the most successful experiment in human freedom. ... We are an ideological nation, and our most successful leaders are ideologues.” Denouncing Bill Clinton as a “counter-revolutionary” (!), Ledeen is especially eager to make one point: “Of all the myths that cloud our understanding, and therefore paralyze our will and action, the most pernicious is that only the Left has a legitimate claim to the revolutionary tradition.”

Ledeen’s conviction that the Right is as revolutionary as the Left derives from his youthful interest in Italian fascism. In 1975, Ledeen published an interview,

in book form, with the Italian historian Renzo de Felice, a man he greatly admires. It caused a great controversy in Italy. Ledeen later made clear that he relished the ire of the left-wing establishment precisely because "De Felice was challenging the conventional wisdom of Italian Marxist historiography, which

ic elements—capable of effecting fundamental changes—could come to power." Like his claim that the common ground between Nazism and Italian fascism was "exceedingly minimal"—Ledeen writes, "The fact of the Axis Pact should not be permitted to become the overriding consideration in this analysis"—Ledeen's

wrote in 1996, "The people yearn for the real thing—revolution."

Ledeen was especially interested in the role played by youth in Italian fascism. It was here that he detected the movement's most exciting revolutionary potential. The young Ledeen wrote that those who exalted the position of youth in the fascist revolution—like those who argued in favor of his beloved "universal fascism"—were committed to exporting Italian fascism to the whole world, an idea in which Mussolini was initially uninterested. When he was later converted to it, Mussolini said that fascism drew on the universalist heritage of Rome, both ancient and Catholic. No doubt Ledeen thinks that the new Rome in Washington has the same universalist mission. He writes that people around Berto Ricci—the editor of the fascist newspaper *L'Universale*, and a man he calls "brilliant" and "an example of enthusiasm and independence"—"called for the formation of a new empire, an empire based not on military conquest but rather on Italy's unique genius for civilization. ... They intended to develop the traditions of their country and their civilization in such a manner as to make them the basic tenets of a new world order." Ledeen adds, in a passage that anticipates his later love of creative destruction, "Clearly the act of destruction which would produce the flowering of the new fascist hegemony would sweep away the present generation of Italians, along with the rest." And Giuseppe Bottai, to whom Ledeen attributes "considerable energy and autonomy," was notable for his belief that "the infusion of the creative energies of a new generation was essential" for the fascist revolution. Bottai "implored the young ... to found a new order arising from the spontaneous activity of their creation."

One of the greatest exponents of such youthful vitalism was the high priest of

LEDEEN CRITICIZES MUSSOLINI PRECISELY FOR NOT BEING REVOLUTIONARY ENOUGH. "HE NEVER HAD ENOUGH CONFIDENCE IN THE ITALIAN PEOPLE TO PERMIT THEM A GENUINE PARTICIPATION IN FASCISM."

had always insisted that fascism was a reactionary movement." What de Felice showed, by contrast, was that Italian fascism was both right-wing and revolutionary. Ledeen had himself argued this very point in his book, *Universal Fascism*, published in 1972. That work starts with the assertion that it is a mistake to explain the support of fascism by millions of Europeans "solely because they had been hypnotized by the rhetoric of gifted orators and manipulated by skilful propagandists." "It seems more plausible," Ledeen argued, "to attempt to explain their enthusiasm by treating them as believers in the rightness of the fascist cause, which had a coherent ideological appeal to a great many people." For Ledeen, as for the lifelong fascist theoretician and practitioner, Giuseppe Bottai, that appeal lay in the fact that fascism was "the Revolution of the 20th century."

Ledeen supports de Felice's distinction between "fascism-movement" and "fascism-regime." Mussolini's regime, he says, was "authoritarian and reactionary"; by contrast, within "fascism-movement," there were many who were animated by "a desire to renew." These people wanted "something more revolutionary: the old ruling class had to be swept away so that newer, more dynam-

careful distinction between fascist "regime" and "movement" makes him a clear apologist for the latter. "While 'fascism-movement' was overcome and eventually suppressed by 'fascism-regime,'" he explains, "fascism nevertheless constituted a political revolution in Italy. For the first time, there was an attempt to mobilize the masses and to involve them in the political life of the country." Indeed, Ledeen criticizes Mussolini precisely for not being revolutionary enough. "He never had enough confidence in the Italian people to permit them a genuine participation in fascism." Ledeen therefore concurs with the fascist intellectual, Camillo Pellizi, who argues—in a book Ledeen calls "a moving and fundamental work"—that Mussolini's was "a failed revolution." Pellizi had hoped that "the new era was to be the era of youthful genius and creativity": for him, Ledeen says, the fascist state was "a generator of energy and creativity." The purest ideologues of fascism, in other words, wanted something very similar to that which Ledeen himself wants now, namely a "worldwide mass movement" enabling the peoples of the world, "liberated" by American militarism, to participate in the "greatest experiment in human freedom." Ledeen

fascism, the poet and adventurer Gabriele D'Annunzio, to whom Ledeen devoted an enthusiastic biography in 1977. Years ago, I visited D'Annunzio's house on the shores of Lake Garda: there is a battleship in the garden and a Brenn gun in the sitting room. D'Annunzio was an eccentric and militaristic Italian Nietzschean who "eulogized rape and acts of savagery" committed by the people he called his spiritual ancestors. The poet was also an early prophet of military intervention and regime change: he invaded the Croatian city of Fiume (now Rijeka) in 1919 and held the city for a year, during which he put into practice his theories of "New Order." In 1918, moreover, D'Annunzio had dropped propaganda leaflets over Vienna promising to liberate the Austrians from their own government, something Ledeen hails as "a glorious gesture." D'Annunzio's watchword was "the liberation of human personality." "His heroism during the war made it possible," Ledeen writes, "to bridge the chasm between intellectuals and the masses. ... The revolt D'Annunzio led was directed against the old order of Western Europe, and was carried out in the name of youthful creativity and virility."

As Ledeen shows, the Italian fascists expressed their desire "to tear down the old order" (his words from 2002) in terms that are curiously anticipatory of a famous statement in 2003 by the Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld. In 1932, Asvero Gravelli also divided Europe into "old" and "new" when he wrote, in *Towards the Fascist International*, "Either old Europe or young Europe. Fascism is the gravedigger of old Europe. Now the forces of the Fascist International are rising." It all sounds rather prophetic. ■

John Laughland is a London-based writer and lecturer and a trustee of the British Helsinki Human Rights Group.

Johnny Can't Add

But Suresh Venktasubramanian can.

By Fred Reed

MAYBE WE NEED to wake up.

The other day I went to the Web site of Bell Labs, one of the country's premier research outfits. I clicked at random on a research project, Programmable Networks for Tomorrow. The scientists working on the project were Gisli Hjalmstýsson, Nikos Anerousis, Pawan Goyal, K. K. Ramakrishnan, Jennifer Rexford, Kobus Van der Merwe, and Sneha Kumar Kasera.

Clicking again at random, this time on the Information Visualization Research Group, the research team turned out to be John Ellson, Emden Gansner, John Mocenigo, Stephen North, Jeffery Korn, Eleftherios Koutsofios, Bin Wei, Shankar Krishnan, and Suresh Venktasubramanian.

Here is a pattern I've noticed in countless organizations at the high end of the research spectrum. In the personnel lists, certain groups are phenomenally overrepresented with respect to their appearance in the general American population: Chinese, Koreans, Indians, and, though it doesn't show in the above lists, Jews. What the precise statistical breakdown across the world of American research might be, I don't know. An awful lot of personnel lists look like the foregoing.

Think about this: Asians make up a small percent of the population, yet there are company directories in Silicon Valley that read like a New Delhi phone book. Many of our premier universities have become heavily Asian, with many of these students going into the sciences. If Chinese citizens and Americans of Chinese descent left tomorrow

for Beijing, American research, and graduate schools in the sciences and engineering, would be crippled.

Jews are two or three percent of the population. On the rough-cut assumption that Goldstein is probably Jewish, and Ferguson probably isn't, it is evident that Jews are doing lots more than their share of research—and, given that people named Miller may well be Jewish, the name-recognition approach probably produces a substantial undercount. I asked a friend, researching a book on Harvard, the percentage of Asian and Jewish students. Answer: "Asians close to 20%. Jews close to 25%—unofficial, because you are allowed to list by gender, ethnicity, geography, but not religion. Our last taboo."

None of this is original with me. In 1999, the National Academy of Sciences released a study noting that over half of U.S. engineering doctorates are awarded to foreign students. Where are Smith and Jones?

Why are members of these very small groups doing so much of the important research for the United States? That's easy. They're smart, they go into the sciences, and they work hard. Potatoes are more mysterious. It's not affirmative action. They produce. The qualifications of these students can easily be checked. They have them. The question is not whether these groups perform, or why, but why the rest of us no longer do. What has happened?

It is not an easy question, but a lot of it, I think, is the deliberate enstuporation of American education. Again, the idea

is not original with me. Said the American Educational Research Association of the NAS report, "Serious deficiencies in American pre-college education, along with wavering support for basic research, were cited by the panel as major contributors to this problem."

Consider mathematics. In the mid-Sixties I took freshman chemistry at Hampden-Sydney College, a solid school in Virginia but not nearly MIT. It was assumed—assumed without thought—that students knew algebra cold. They had to. You can't do heavy loads of highly mathematical homework, or wrestle with ideas like integrating probability densities over three-space, or do endless gas-law and reaction-rate calculations, if you aren't sure how exponents work.

Remedial mathematics at the college level was unheard of. The assumption was that people who weren't ready for college work should be somewhere else. No one thought about it. Today, remedial classes in both reading and math are common at universities. We seem to be dumbing ourselves to death.

I recently had children go through the high schools of Arlington, Va., a suburb of Washington. I watched them come home with badly misspelled chemistry handouts from half-educated teachers, watched them do stupid, make-work science projects that taught them nothing about the sciences but used lots of pretty paper.

The extent of scholastic decline is sometimes astonishing. So help me, I once saw, in a middle school in Arlington, a student's project on a bulletin board celebrating Enrico Fermi's contributions to "Nucler Physicts" (Scripps-Howard National Spelling Bee champions: 2003, Sai Guntuyri; 2002, Pratyush Buddiga; 2001, Sean Conley; 2000, George Thampy; 1999, Nupur Lala).

It appears that a few groups are keeping their standards up and the rest of us are drowning our children in self-indul-

gent social engineering, political correctness, and feel-good substitutes for learning.

Some of our growing dependency is hidden. We do not merely rely on small industrious groups in America and on foreigners working here. Increasingly the United States contracts out its technical thinking to Asia.

If you read technically aware publications like *Wired* magazine (and how many people do?), you find that major American corporations have more and more of their computer programming done by people in (for example) India. In cities like Bombay, large colonies of Indians work for U.S. companies by Internet. This again means that counting names at American institutions underestimates the growth of intellectual dependence.

REMEDIAL CLASSES IN BOTH READING AND MATH ARE COMMON AT UNIVERSITIES. WE SEEM TO BE DUMBING OURSELVES TO DEATH.

The Indians, and others, have discovered the suddenly important principle that intellectual capital is separable from physical capital. To program for Boeing, you don't have to be anywhere near Seattle. Nor do you need an aircraft plant. All you need is a \$700 computer, a book called something like *How to Program in C++*, and a fast Internet connection. Crucial work like circuit-design can now be done abroad by bright people who don't need chip factories. They need workstations, the Internet, and engineering degrees.

This too we would be wise to ponder. Americans often think of India chiefly as a land of ghastly poverty. Well, yes. It is also a country with about three times our population and a lot of very bright people who want to get ahead. They're professionally hungry. We no longer are.

People speak of globalization. This is

it. And it's just beginning. Where will it take us? How long can we maintain a technologically dominant economy if we are, as a country, no longer willing to do our own thinking? If we rely heavily on less than 10 percent of our own population while employing more and more foreigners abroad?

It's not them. It's us. I've heard the phrase, "the Asian challenge." I don't think so. When Sally Chen gets a doctorate in biochemistry, she's not challenging America. She's getting a doctorate in biochemistry. Those who study have no reason to apologize to those who don't just because mainstream American schooling and enterprise have collapsed.

The Mathematical Association of America runs a contest for the extremely bright and prepared among high-school students. It is called the United

States of America Mathematics Olympiad, and it "provides a means of identifying and encouraging the most creative secondary mathematics students in the country."

An unedited section of a list of those recently chosen: Sharat Bhat, Tongke Xue, Matthew Peairs, Wen Li, Jongmin Baek, Aaron Kleinman, David Stolp, Andrew Schwartz, Rishi Gupta, Jennifer Laaser, Inna Zakharevich, Neil Chua, Jonathan Lowd, Simon Rubinstein, Joshua Batson, Jimmy Jia, Jichao Qian, Dmitry Taubinsky, David Kaplan, Erica Wilson, Kai Dai, Julian Kolev, Jonathan Xiong, Stephen Guo.

Q.E.D. ■

Fred Reed's writing has appeared in the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Harper's, and National Review, among other places.

[the great betrayal]

Why Tariffs Work

America achieved industrial supremacy through a combination of protectionist policies and minimal regulation.

By Martin Sieff

HOW DO NATIONS become prosperous and powerful?—through protectionism, the traditional policy of every Republican president from Lincoln through Eisenhower.

So deeply has the Pavlovian brainwashing of the public mind by free-market true believers taken root that this statement comes across, even to many Democrats, let alone almost all Republicans, as an evident absurdity. To maintain that free trade has eroded American prosperity over the past 30 years is akin to maintaining as a scientific proposition that the earth is flat.

Yet it is the free-trade models of pure—or, rather, bowdlerized—Adam Smith that have sold American policymakers and opinion-shapers this fake bill of goods. America rose to global industrial supremacy, generating unimagined prosperity for its people, behind a century of tariff walls. Under John F. Kennedy, with his Kennedy Round of tariff cuts to stimulate global free trade, those walls started to tumble down, and successive presidents, Republican and Democrat alike continued the process. As a result, over the last 40 years first Western Europe and then the nations of east Asia have been climbing to prosperity at our expense. Consequently, America is now in industrial and financial terms in far worse shape to weather a world war or sustained global security

or economic crisis than Britain was in either 1931 or 1940.

Writing last winter in the *Financial Times*, Princeton history professor Harold James noted that in terms of trade balance alone, the United States could not maintain global empire and hegemony for any period of time as the 19th-century British empire had. “The US, unlike the British empire, is building its rule on a foundation that is potentially quite unstable,” James wrote. “The British empire in its 19th century heyday ran enormous current account surpluses (7 percent of gross domestic product on the eve of the first world war). For more than 20 years, in the period of its cold war victory and of the conversion of the world to a new consensus about markets, the US has had quite large current account deficits. In 2001, the deficit was about 4.2 of GDP.”

The free-market orthodoxy recognizes this outflow but says that it is nothing to worry about. A rising tide, neocon pundits and economists argue, lifts all boats. Therefore, as long as the United States remains the pre-eminent global power and the most attractive place to invest, money will continue to flow in for investment and U.S. Treasury bondholding. And this will continue to make a trifling little quarter of a trillion or so annual outflows unimportant.

For more than 20 years, as the annual

current account deficits, especially with Japan and China, steadily mounted, we have continued to live in this fools' paradise. But over the past two years, the first taste of the horrendous bills to be paid has come in.

First came the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 that annihilated the greatest symbol after Wall Street of American capitalism, the two great gleaming towers of the World Trade Center, along with 2,800 people trapped inside them at the time. Almost suddenly, America was no longer the safest place in the world to invest money. Then, last year, came something Thomas Jefferson would certainly have recognized as a fire bell in the night. For the first time in history, China exceeded the United States as the greatest magnet for international investment.

Yet China is in no way an open, market economy. It remains a heavily regulated, fiercely authoritarian one-party state that is merciless in crushing religious movements it cannot control. Nor has China mellowed into anything remotely resembling a tolerant, pluralistic democracy over the past 20 years that it has enjoyed open access to American markets. On the contrary, over the past decades its foreign policy and military build-up have been marked by an increasing hostility towards the United States. But this grim evolution has not

deterred international investors from continuing to flood into China and neither has the effective protection of China's vast domestic market. These developments contradict every pure free-market model and political assertion that Clinton and the neocons alike have expounded. But they are entirely consistent with the record of human history.

Britain and France both rose to dominate the global industrial marketplace from the mid-17th century when they adopted protectionist, mercantilist policies. Louis XIV's great minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert pulled off this achievement in France. In Britain, with far longer lasting effect, Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell enacted the Navigation Acts in the 1650s that led to three centuries of global supremacy for Britain's merchant marine. France in the 18th century abandoned Colbert's policy, more from sloth than conviction. And Britain won the great race for global industrial supremacy.

By the mid-19th century, however, the British, riding high on two generations of protection-generated global trading

had emerged to challenge Britain—the United States and Germany.

Abraham Lincoln, as well as winning the Civil War and restoring the Union was also the architect of America's global industrial supremacy and not by oversight either. Lincoln had made his living—and he made a good one—as a railroad lawyer before 1860. And as president, he pushed through not one but two far-reaching tariff laws to protect the rising colossus of American industry. The great U.S. domestic market was therefore built over the next 70 years on the twin pillars of minimum government regulation and strong tariff protectionist measures. By 1880, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in Germany, working with the dominant National Liberal Party, had erected similar tariff walls there, building on those the unified Germany had inherited from the old Prussian-dominated Zollverein, or Customs Union, after 1815.

Since 1950, first Japan, then South Korea have both very sensibly followed this same overall policy of maintaining strong free markets and industrial concentrations of power at home, while protecting key domestic industries from

for itself. For, as James Madison memorably noted, men are not angels. Therefore, President Clinton's policy allowed China and the smaller "tiger" nations of Asia to export their way into recovery and further growth at America's expense. But it was akin to refusing to wear a suit of armor when your global trading rivals still wore theirs and allowing them to slash at you. The result was not greater benefits for all, including America, but greater benefits for America's trade rivals at Uncle Sam's expense.

Yale historian Paul Kennedy was hung out to dry by neoconservative critics in 1989 when he argued in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* that the aspiration to be the global super- or hyperpower of any era automatically led to strategic overstretch and ruinous long-term economic policies. For in such cases, these are tailored to the demands of imperial responsibility rather than to ensure the more modest and realizable prosperity of the home society. George Will and Charles Krauthammer led the chorus of bully sneers at the time.

Yet this was Clinton's explicit policy. In order to bail Southeast Asia out of the 1997-98 financial crises, he kept free-trade doors open to those countries—and China—to continue to export freely into the United States, running up ever worse balance of payments deficits for his own country in the process. National prosperity was being sacrificed to the imperatives of global leadership and empire, exactly as Kennedy had warned.

The neocon dream of using universal free trade to create universal democracy and thereafter universal peace is not new. It has all been dreamed—and discredited—long ago. Sir Norman Angell made the case with equal passion and naïve confidence in his 1910 book *The Great Illusion*. Within four years, World War I had demolished his delusions. The great British historian Correlli Barnett, writing in 1972, described this beguiling

FREE TRADE ON A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD BENEFITS EVERYONE. BUT NO PLAYING FIELD IS EVER COMPLETELY LEVEL. AND EVERY NATION OR REGIONAL TRADING BLOC WILL BE OUT TO MAXIMIZE BENEFIT FOR ITSELF.

supremacy, opted for cheaper food and an easier life. Sir Robert Peel, to popular acclaim, abolished the Corn Laws, trusting in the free market to handle bothersome shortfalls. In the short term, the British standard of living grew rapidly, thanks to the industrial supremacy Britain enjoyed over the rest of the world. But by 1870, two vast new industrial powers commanding far larger domestic markets and resources, and both protected by heavy tariff barriers,

ruinous international competition. This defies University of Chicago graphs and theoretical models. But it works.

The reason why it works is not hard to see. Free trade on a level playing field theoretically benefits everyone, and there is no doubt that general agreements to lower tariffs generate trade investment and more prosperity for all. But no playing field is ever completely level. And every nation or regional trading bloc will be out to maximize benefit

vision in his classic *The Collapse of British Power*: "The post-evangelical hopes of a peaceful world society founded on love or the moral law or economics took no positive account of existing human aggressiveness or rationality, but dismissed them as morally reprehensible or rationally absurd habits that mankind ought to decide to give up." Barnett could as easily have been describing Francis Fukuyama's hosanna about the eternal triumph of the liberal democratic free-market state on a global scale. Or he could have been replying to some neocon columnist explaining why no free-market Muslim would ever abandon his Lexus for Osama bin Laden's olive tree.

Princeton's Harold James concluded in the *Financial Times* that the precarious "high tide" of capital inflows to the United States "could be rapidly reversed on some chance piece of bad news. Such a reversal would involve a collapse of the US stock market, the property market and the dollar. ... The financial reversal would also bring about the collapse of the US security policy and its calculated strategy of world pacification." What a price then for Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz's National Security Strategy that foresees a hyper-powered United States enforcing its unipolar moment into infinity?

Such fantasies are destined not only to collapse but also to bring ruin to hundreds of millions of Americans. For every great nation that has become prosperous over the last 350 years has done so through protectionist policies, exporting far more than it imports and doing so on its own shipping. Naïve free trade policies with powerful protective tariff states ruined 18th-century France and 19th-century Britain, and now they are ruining us. ■

Martin Sieff is Chief International Analyst for United Press International.

Back to the Ladies' Tees

Feminist pipe dreams won't erase the sports gender gap.

By Steve Sailer

BECAUSE I HAVE LONG been interested in how female athletes match up against men, I particularly looked forward to the recent battle of the sexes on the golf course. With six hours of web searching and spreadsheet jiggering, I was able to publish a UPI article called "How will Annika Sorenstam perform?" the day before the top female golfer teed it up with the boys at the Colonial Country Club. This was my forecast, based on her typical scores on Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) courses, which average about five strokes per round easier than the PGA courses: "So, I predict that if Sorenstam plays this week the way she's played in the rest of 2003, she'll miss the cut by four strokes." That's exactly what she did.

She shot what she called one of the best rounds of her life on Thursday (71) then regressed toward her mean on Friday (74). She hit a disastrous stretch of five bogeys in eight holes in the middle of her second round but then gutted it out and closed with seven straight pars to stanch the bleeding. She still beat 13 men out of 114, so she played extremely well under pressure. Congratulations, Annika!

But while her cut-missing was celebrated wildly in the media, it confirmed my assessment: she couldn't make a living on the men's tour. Sorenstam carefully selected the Colonial tournament because the course suited her and

because its field is limited in both quality (all five of the year's multiple winners—Tiger Woods, Davis Love, Mike Weir, Ernie Els, and Vijay Singh—had passed it up) and quantity (about 35 fewer golfers start than in the normal tournament, but the same number make the cut).

Top *Washington Post* sports columnist Tom Boswell claimed ahead of time that Annika could be a top-100 player on the PGA Tour and even win one or two tournaments. Boswell was unusual for a journalist in that he actually tried to use statistics. He took Sorenstam's LPGA scoring average then adjusted for the greater length of the PGA courses. But, either through ignorance or ideology, he failed to account for the obvious facts that the men play inherently more rigorous courses and that those links are set up harder with longer grass in the rough and shorter grass on the greens.

My estimate was that if Annika had been playing on the men's tour all of 2003, her scoring average would be tied for 183rd out of the 185 golfers on the PGA's scoring average list. But the guys down at the bottom are not among the top 185 in the world at present. They are ex-stars like David Duval and Craig Stadler who are invited to tournaments solely because they used to be big names.

There may also be 100 minor-league golfers who are better than Duval and

Stadler (and Sorenstam) right now. Plus, say, 125 golfers in Europe, plus more on the Asian tour and on the Senior (Champions) tour. Overall, Annika is probably about the 300th to 500th best golfer in the world. Not bad, but nowhere near as good as you have been hearing from the press because few journalists understand how to think quantitatively about human differences.

Veteran pundit James J. Kilpatrick has rightly argued that the most important course of study in college for aspiring journalists should be statistics. But if your ideological bias is that everyone is exactly the same, or at least they morally ought to be, you will not be comfortable with the tools developed by the great statisticians.

Statistics is essentially the study of differences, including human differences. In his recent book *The Lady Tasting Tea: How Statistics Revolutionized Science in the Twentieth Century*, David Salsburg makes clear that many fundamental statistical techniques were invented by the British hereditarians Francis Galton, Karl Pearson, and Ronald Fisher, who were fascinated with measuring the heritability of traits, especially intelligence—an inquiry that continues to attract furious denunciations even today.

Galton—who also invented fingerprinting, the weather map, and the silent dog whistle—was Charles Darwin's half-cousin. Their common grandparent was the famed doctor and polymath Erasmus Darwin, who proposed his own version of a theory of evolution. Not surprisingly, Galton was fascinated by how intelligence tends to run in families. In 1869, Galton wrote the first book on the subject, *Hereditary Genius*. To aid his research, Galton invented the correlation coefficient and the concept of “regression to the mean,” which describes how smart parents tend to have less smart children (and, more happily,

how dim parents tend to have children brighter than themselves). In the 20th century, Fisher's enthusiasm for Galtonism led him to become not only the most important statistician of all time but also the leading mathematical geneticist of his era.

Galton's “London School” demonstrated that the proper way to compare people's performances is not absolutely but relatively—often in terms of a bell curve. For example: Colonial's winner Kenny Perry finished at 261, 19 under the par of 280. Justin Leonard was 13 under. Both shot rounds of 61, since conditions at Colonial were easy this year—soft, holding greens, no wind. Shooting 145 for two rounds before being cut, Annika was en route to a four round total of 290 or ten over par. Thus, she projected to be 29 strokes or 11.1 percent worse than the winner.

Eleven percent doesn't sound like much. Yet, because of diminishing returns, that is expected for a gender gap in sports in which the competitors strive against nature rather than against each other. In our 1997 article “Track and Battlefield,” sports physiologist Stephen Seiler and I pointed out that the gender

round. Unlike Annika, however, she would lose ugly, as Serena knows from rallying against obscure male pros.

Here is the difference between objective and subjective sports: an Olympic sprinter can run 100 meters in 10 seconds. I could probably step outside right now in my bathrobe and slippers and run 100 meters in 20 seconds. So, arithmetically, he's only twice as good as I am. But if I stepped into the ring with a top boxer for 15 rounds, he would not win ten rounds to my five. He would win on a one-punch knockout in the first 20 seconds.

Annika can score respectably because she is playing the course. But Serena would be humiliated by a professional male tennis player because she would be playing him. That is why the Galtonians invented statistical techniques like the bell curve—they are the way to compare people's performances rationally.

Thinking like a statistician allows for fascinating questions that open up important perspectives on society. For example, I compared Annika statistically to the small, short-hitting, old-timer Corey Pavin. I suggested, based on their

IF YOUR IDEOLOGICAL BIAS IS THAT EVERYONE IS EXACTLY THE SAME, YOU WILL NOT BE COMFORTABLE WITH THE TOOLS DEVELOPED BY THE GREAT STATISTICIANS.

gap between the male and female world records in the ten main running events from 100 meters to the marathon averaged 11.5%.

Yet, Serena Williams, the world's best female tennis player, has strongly denied any intention of ever attempting a men's tournament. Annika and Serena are about equally good compared to the rest of the women in their respective sports. If Serena entered a 128-player men's field, she would do exactly as well as Annika did: fail to make the second

scoring averages, that he was at least two strokes per 18 holes better than she. As it turned out, over 36 holes he beat her by seven strokes. Corey is clearly a better golfer than Annika, but why? It's not because he hits it longer, now that Annika has added a dramatic amount of upper-body muscle mass in the last couple of years. At Colonial, they both averaged 268 yards off the tee (99th out of 114 players). A major reason is that Corey has more delicate judgment around the greens. That is a typical sex

difference in professional golf—even though women overall tend to have better small motor skills than men at tasks like sewing and typing. Men tend to be better than women at three-dimensional visualization. Golf-course architects build undulations into greens to test golfers' ability to forecast the gravity-induced curvature of their putts.

Also, male pros simply constitute a much more highly selected fraction of all male golfers than female pros make up of all female golfers. In other words, out of the millions of slightly built guys who were nuts about golf while they were growing up, Corey Pavin is simply way, way out at the far right edge of the bell curve of talent.

In contrast, it is an understatement that not very many American teenage girls have been obsessed with golf. Indeed, a major PR problem for the American-based LPGA tour is that fewer and fewer American women are winning its tournaments. In Sorenstam's Sweden, and in East Asia, golf is more fashionable among heterosexual teenage girls than it is here. (In fact, girl's high school golf in the U.S. is increasingly dominated by East Asian girls. The six-foot-tall Korean-American Michelle Wie is the most promising player of the next generation.)

Golf used to be trendy among young American women. My mom once gave me a book of golf memorabilia that included women's magazine covers from the 1920s showing young ladies dressed in the height of flapper fashion swinging their mashie-niblicks. In that decade, the great P.G. Wodehouse sold dozens of romantic comedy short stories about beautiful girls who shoot scratch and the duffers who love them to the *Saturday Evening Post* for bundles of money.

At some point, though, golf stopped being sexy for American girls (perhaps because it is not as good for losing

weight as, say, aerobics.) Nowadays, the great majority of amateur women players in America are the wives of male players. Typically, they are post-menopausal. Most of the fans at LPGA tournaments are middle-aged or elderly husband-wife couples. The next biggest cohort: packs of burly, crop-haired, gym-teacher-looking women who express approval of their favorites' best shots by punching each other excitedly on the shoulders.

As all this shows, thinking seriously

about fun and games can reveal a lot about both contemporary society and unchanging human nature. Nothing in life is more voluminously quantified than sports, with its millions of statistics. And, in an intensely unfair world, sports offer just about the most level playing field we have, the closest approach to a real world laboratory. ■

Steve Sailer writes for VDARE.com, where a version of this piece first appeared.

Sign of the Times

When diversity is the goal, standards suffer.

By R. Cort Kirkwood

"SO JAYSON BLAIR could live, the journalist had to die." Thus spake the *New York Times's* ex-prodigy, laid low for a record of prevarication lesser liars could barely match in a lifetime, much less a few short years.

The apogee of the Blair disaster, however, wasn't the writer's poetic fare-thee-well. Rather, it was the resignation of *Times* executive editor Howell Raines and managing editor Gerald Boyd on June 5, five weeks to the day after Blair's deportation from journalism's Mecca.

The *Times* said little of their departure, although publisher Arthur Sulzberger Jr. acknowledged the pair thought it "best for the *Times* that they step down." Best indeed, given what transpired.

The postmortem on Blair opens a cadaver of smelly facts about modern journalism. Chief among them, papers such as the *Times* focus on a priority far from what most readers might think. That priority is diversity, or bringing

more "journalists of color" into the newsroom, as opposed to what it should be: getting the story straight.

Published weeks before the two editors jumped ship, a titanic confession in the *Times* explained how a cub reporter conned the smartest editors in the business. Blair, who began his comedy of errors at the *Boston Globe*, amassed more than four-dozen corrections and plagiarized copiously. More than that, he simply concocted stories. A plagiarized writer at another paper finally blew the whistle. Blair's undoing was fiction about the war in Iraq, but he also spun yarns about the D.C. sniper shootings. This curt, pre-sniper warning, from a *Times* editor in April 2002, appeared in the paper's windy apology: "We have to stop Jayson from writing for the *Times*. Right now." Having reported that, the same corrective story quotes a *Times* spokesman: "When considered over all, Mr. Blair's correction rate at the *Times*

was within acceptable limits." Some *Times* editors, apparently, are pro-choice on truth and accuracy, but at any rate the *Times's* problems are such that they appointed a 20-man committee to untangle Blair's web.

If the committee wants to do a thorough job, it should look beyond Raines, Boyd, and Blair to William McGowan's *Coloring the News, How Crusading for Diversity Has Corrupted American Journalism*.

For the committee's benefit, a few facts:

- Gannett, which owns *USA Today*, used to "comb" stories for the number of minorities represented, using computers that "coded sources by race and gender." The company backed off in 1997, but the hare-brained policy called "mainstreaming" continued. Today, editors still order writers, even on simple stories unrelated to race, to quote a person of color.
- In 1996, the *Boston Globe* abandoned a minority internship program after a white college senior filed a complaint with the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission. The paper told him he could not apply.
- Most importantly for the *Times*, at journalism's "Diversity Summit" in 1992, Sulzberger said diversity is "the single most important issue facing the paper," a prophecy of where the *Times's* priorities would lie while Blair was defrauding the paper.

Diversity shenanigans at the *Times* include not identifying the race of murderous criminals at large. Like other big dailies, it follows the Hollywood script on stories about criminals of color and white, "racist" police. The *Times* also avoided documenting the result of lowering standards at New York's police department to boost minority ranks. The result was incompetence and violent criminality among some of the rook-

ies. The *Times*, McGowan reports, "did not bring up the diversity subtext either in its initial reporting or subsequently."

And the *Times* is just one influential paper obsessed with diversity. The *Washington Post*, *New Republic* writer Ruth Shalit wrote in 1995, was ever

UNSURPRISINGLY, REPORTERS FEAR HONEST DISCUSSION OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, EVEN FOR STORIES.

embroiled in racial contretemps that warped the news. Although the *Post* cited 40 alleged errors in Shalit's piece, it contained enough quotes from internal documents and journalists to prove Shalit's point: "diversity" was wrecking the paper.

"Resistance to affirmative action," she reported, quoting an internal *Post* report on diversity, "is to be dispelled through re-education" and "diversity training." White reporters were told they could not apply for certain jobs, she wrote, and "many *Post* staffers allege ... the paper has been forced to hire ... reporters who lack the skills to do daily newspaper work competently." One writer told Shalit, "[I]t's definitely a huge advantage in this business to be a minority. If you're black, they recruit you, they plead with you, they offer you extra money."

Unsurprisingly, reporters fear honest discussion of affirmative action, even for stories. "It is taboo ... in the newsroom," a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle* told McGowan, "[to] ask questions about racial preferences."

In journalism, diversity is a religion, and even McGowan's detailed treatment is an incomplete exegesis. A steady stream of propaganda, including flyers and videotapes, lands on editors' desks. Minority job fairs and internships are urgent business. Editors get surveys to determine the race and sex composition

of newsrooms. If an editor doesn't answer, he gets another.

Web sites prominently display diversity links to "re-educate" editors and teach them to play the race card. The American Society of Newspaper Editors, for instance, links to its newsroom census:

"We count the number of journalists, their gender and race." It also features the "Time-Out For Accuracy and Diversity" project to "help newsrooms think about diversity."

Looking for a diversity conference? The journalismjobs.com site has links to a rainbow coalition: the national journalism associations for Blacks, Asian-Americans, Hispanics, South Asians, Native Americans, and Gays and Lesbians. Needless to say, the National Association of Straight, White, Christian Male Journalists, awaits charter members.

For the last seven years, this writer has attended professional conferences, in particular those of the Virginia Press Association. VPA is an outstanding state press organization that never shrinks from frankly discussing the weaknesses of newspapers and why the public distrusts them. At this year's conference, a veteran journalist suggested papers need more political diversity, i.e., more conservatives in the newsroom. If newspapers must push diversity, the speaker said, they must push it across the board, and that means hiring a few right-wingers who bring a different set of assumptions to a news story. Still, VPA holds diversity education workshops at conventions and professional education seminars. It sponsors minority job fairs and pushes minority internships. Point

is, from national to local levels, journalism organizations keep editors abreast of their diversity duties.

All this sanctimony is meant to recruit minorities. Problem is, the wagging fingers don't dirty their nails in small-town journalism. Most editors and reporters toil in the vineyards of school-board meetings and city councils. They are not drinking the wine of the Moscow bureau or Senate Finance Committee or even the lesser dregs of the big-city Metro desk. Most papers aren't the *New York Times* or *Washington Post*.

Why is that important to the diversity debate? Editors at small newspapers have neither the resources nor the time to wait for minority applicants. For one thing, few apply. The big papers scoop them up, as the *Times* scooped up Blair. For another, the demagogues of diversity don't know, or don't remember, what an open slot at a paper with just eight or 10 reporters means.

If the *New York Times* leaves a slot open for months to find a racially correct candidate, it simply means one vacancy amid hundreds of slots. At the small paper, a vacancy can amount to 10 to 12.5 percent of the staff. If a writer hammers out six or seven stories a week, a position empty for just a month means news content drops between 25-30 stories. That is a significant blow to the paper's all-important local coverage, as well as an increased strain on editors trying to fill space when the paper has fewer advertisements and more open pages.

High turnover plagues the low end of the business; anxious editors must sometimes cull dozens of résumés to find a candidate who is not only qualified but also can move quickly; if possible, before the person he is replacing leaves, to allow for overlap and training.

This truth, of course, does not address simple fairness. In the old days, jobs were supposed to be open to all; the most qualified candidate who showed

up first got one. Diversity ideology says some jobs must be reserved for those with a politically pleasing complexion. This is unfair and unjust, and as the *Boston Globe* learned, perhaps against the law. Indeed, they used to call it racial discrimination. Journalism officialdom does not agree.

This racial agenda is the background against which the Jayson Blair drama played out. Yet some writers were in denial. "Why is it that when white reporters commit similar acts ... no one in the establishment media launches breathy social commentaries about ... white privilege and entitlement in the newsroom?" *Washington Post* columnist Terry Neal asked.

Neal cites the disgraced Stephen Glass, who passed fiction off as fact in the *New Republic*, and Ruth Shalit, the author of the aforementioned indictment of the *Post*, who was accused of plagiarism herself. Then there's Mike Barnicle, the disgraced columnist for the *Boston Globe*. "It seems only the transgressions of black journalists," he wrote, "evoke the race card." Maybe that's because no one suggests these three were promoted, hired, or favored because they were white. Right or wrong, observers make precisely that charge about Blair, i.e., that the *Times* hired and promoted him because he was black. Everyone suspects it.

Listen to Raines: "Our paper has a commitment to diversity and by all accounts he appeared to be a promising young minority reporter," Raines said, meeting with staff members after the Blair affair exploded in his face. "I believe in aggressively providing hiring and career opportunities for minorities. Does that mean I personally favored Jayson? Not consciously. But you have a right to ask if I, as a white man from Alabama, with those convictions, gave him one chance too many by not stopping his appointment to the sniper team.

When I look into my heart for the truth of that, the answer is yes."

Many of those in denial, including Neal, wrote before that meeting. They jumped to diversity's defense, not knowing Raines would fess up. But he didn't come clean completely. "One chance too many?" Not so. By all accounts, Blair was a clown. He proved that at the *Boston Globe* before the *Times* hired him. It shouldn't have, and Raines and Boyd should have fired Blair long ago. Sulzberger should have fired Raines and Boyd. Then again, diversity, not truth-telling, was "the most important issue facing the paper."

Perhaps diversity must die so journalism can live. ■

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Arts & Letters

FILM

[*The Italian Job*]

The Minis Steal the Show

By Steve Sailer

WITH COSTS SOARING, Hollywood has been trying to reduce risk by recycling successful old movies. Thus the spate of sequels like "The Matrix Reloaded" and remakes like "The Italian Job."

The dismal (and deserved) box office collapse of "Reloaded" in its second weekend (down 59 percent from its giga-hyped opening weekend), points out the artistic flaw in this strategy: regression toward the mean.

Only hit movies like "The Matrix" are sequelized or remade. The main reason the originals were so good was not because of their foolproof concepts or impeccable talent but because all the planets happened to come into perfect alignment during production and promotion. Lightning seldom strikes twice, however, so sequels and remakes are almost always worse than the originals.

Still, that doesn't fully explain the slump Hollywood has been in all of 2003. Even basic entertainment competence has been in short supply. I haven't had this much fun since finishing chemotherapy.

So, my hopes were not high for the new heist thriller-comedy "The Italian Job." It's essentially a giant product placement ad for the new BMW-engineered revival of the Mini Coopers that Michael Caine's gang used in the 1969 movie to spirit their hijacked gold out of Turin.

The original movie has almost been forgotten in America, but, with its hyper-English supporting cast of Noel Coward and Benny Hill (a brain-boggling combination), it retains a grip on the hearts of middle-aged Englishmen. It summons back England's cheeky 1960s, that brief summer of blokes in mod suits and birds in miniskirts (satirized in "Austin Powers") between its austere 1950s and its pear-shaped 1970s. English TV networks play "The Italian Job" before major international soccer matches to remind the English of when they last won the World Cup.

You can understand a little of the resentment that America's domination of global popular cultural engenders when you try to imagine how the 1969 film's English cultists felt when they learned that Paramount was ponying up about \$75 million (a routine budget for

or the master planner in this film? He has a talent for playing likable dumbos, so why not let him play to his strength?

And why move "The Italian Job" from Turin to LA (which, last time I checked, is not Italian)? Look, I love LA. I was born here. But even I'm sick of seeing it on screen. How many more times do we need to see car chases down the concrete-lined LA River?

Two-time Oscar nominee Edward Norton plays the double-crossing villain, but all he did to prepare for the part was to grow a low-rent mustache, making himself look like a sleazy chipmunk.

So, the new movie stinks, right?

Wrong. Everyone's horoscope must have been in sync, because under F. Gary Gray's faultless direction, it's 104 consecutive minutes of nimble entertainment. It's perhaps the most enjoyable movie of the year, with a power-to-weight

WHY DO THEY ALWAYS CAST WAHLBERG AS A SMART GUY? HE HAS A TALENT FOR PLAYING LIKABLE DUMBOS, SO WHY NOT LET HIM PLAY TO HIS STRENGTH?

Hollywood but a staggering sum for any other nation's film industry) to remake this national icon. And all that money just to redo it in Los Angeles, with all new dialogue and plot, and with the blandly all-American Mark Wahlberg taking the Cockney Caine's role!

For inexplicable reasons, Wahlberg has recently become the go-to guy to remake parts originated by screen legends. He has also recently redone Charlton Heston's role in "Planet of the Apes" and Cary Grant's in "Charade" (renamed "The Truth about Charlie"). Perhaps Wahlberg will next star in new versions of "Modern Times," "Citizen Kane," and "The King and I?"

And why do they always cast Wahlberg as a smart guy—an astronaut, a CIA spy,

ratio resembling the supercharged Mini Cooper S cars that steal the show.

The screening audience, especially the women, loved the Minis. My wife whispered to me, "These are the first car chases that I've ever cared about."

The scene of lovely Charlize Theron zipping her Mini through lumbering traffic to nose into a 13' long parking space is going to inspire lots of sorority girls to beg their daddies for these adorable baby station wagons. Of course, other sorority girls whose daddies bought them Hummers will squash them like cockroaches, but at least the Mini girls will look cute up until the moment they become road kill. ■

Rated a mild PG-13 for violence and some language.
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MUSIC

Cashing in: A Prophet with a Guitar

By Anthony Gancarski

JOHNNY CASH'S CAREER renaissance of the last few years is remarkable on any number of levels. That he is well over 70 years of age and is recording some of his most resonant music in decades is a singular anomaly worth contemplation on its own merits, especially in this era when pop acts are constructed to last for years, not decades. Add to that Cash's penchant for reinventing the songs of greats like Tom Petty and Bob Dylan, and it's clear that Cash both recognizes and is comfortable with his legacy: that of a colossus, straddling eons and genres of American pop music.

A colossus doesn't have to apologize for anything. So it was that Cash left Sun Records in 1958 because Sam Phillips, head of the label, claimed that he didn't know how to sell hymns. And so it was that the Man in Black spent the 1960s challenging the hidebound ethos that governed country music by recording two albums at prisons and embracing folk icons like Dylan. Cash's actions were those of what Norman Mailer calls "value" conservatives; his dedication, then and now, was to the redemptive power of his craft. His work belongs to those who need it the most.

In this sense, he is the quintessential American artist working today, embodying the spirit of a time when outlaw country artists like Cash, Waylon Jennings, and the somewhat more controversial David Allan Coe played roadhouses and honkytonks outside the city limits of little southern towns. Then, the music was for the working man, performed by professionals who knew what it was to get hustled out of a pay-

out at the end of the night—men who sang of angels and devils, all too cognizant of how often the lines between the two blurred.

Indeed, his renaissance has been remarkable on many levels. What fuels it is Johnny Cash's own music. Recorded at an age when even politicians occasionally retire, the music Cash has done since connecting with American Records' chief Rick Rubin in the mid-1990s is without peer. It stares human frailty, the limits of man's endurance, and other inevitabilities in their faces, calling them exactly what they are.

Despite Cash's dalliances with counterculture figures from the 1960s onward, it is difficult to see him as anything other than a musician driven by an essential, heartfelt conservatism. His is not the flag-conservatism of Lee Greenwood and his successors, who understand that a serviceable, overtly patriotic country song cannot help charting and finding resonance among those Nebraska ranchers and Kentucky miners for whom country music seems crafted. A conservatism of the heart, the mind, and ultimately, the soul drives Cash's music, from his original lyrics to his more recent interpretations of songs written by men who count him as a formative influence.

After all, it has been almost a decade since 1994, when Cash began working with Rick Rubin, the music impresario who first made his mark molding the image of rap-punk pioneers the Beastie Boys in the mid-1980s. His first release in collaboration with Rubin featured

act of his career—Rubin's reinvention of him as something like an Old-Testament prophet with an acoustic guitar—would allow him freedom to experiment with lyrics and themes denied him previously in his storied career. "Unchained" featured a riveting version of Seattle grunge band Soundgarden's "Rusty Cage." But where Soundgarden's version oozed with vocal and instrumental excesses that diluted lyricist Chris Cornell's imagery, Cash stripped the verse to its bare essentials, revising it as a timeless and stark plaint for anyone wanting to "break [his] rusty cage and run."

Understanding Cash's odyssey as a quest for artistic freedom is key to understanding the effect his music has on fans. He is that rarest of breeds, a "musician's musician" who nonetheless finds a way to connect with the public at large. And so it was that in 2000, despite having been diagnosed with a degenerative nerve disease the previous autumn, he released "Solitary Man," the third album in the "American" series.

Not since Robert Lowell has an American artist, in any genre, dealt so effectively with the ravages of age. But where Lowell fixated on the specifics of his own physical decline, Cash revisited other artists' musings on the sheer existentialism of realizing that one is alone in dealing with one's failings. Many of the songs he recorded on this release are canonical in American pop music; U2's "One," Neil Diamond's "Solitary Man," and Tom Petty's "I Won't Back Down" are all staples of chain-restaurant sound-

IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE CASH AS ANYTHING OTHER THAN A **MUSICIAN DRIVEN BY AN ESSENTIAL, HEARTFELT CONSERVATISM.**

versions of songs by men like Leonard Cohen and Kris Kristofferson: a worthy effort, to be sure, but in retrospect tentative in its unwillingness to stray too far from the familiar terrain of the singer/songwriter.

There would be no such compunctions by 1996's "Unchained." By then, Cash seemed more assured that the final

tracks, and Cash's versions of them are typically spare meditations.

Cash saves his strongest performance on the album for perhaps its most obscure lyric: a version of British goth-rocker Nick Cave's "Mercy Seat." To put this in perspective, Cash covering Nick Cave was as significant as it would have been for Frank Sinatra to perform a Sex

Pistols song. But the success of Cash's version was rooted not in the song's novelty but in its integrity.

Johnny Cash seems incapable of singing a lyric that he doesn't mean, and that is both his singular strength and a possible explanation of why country radio has neglected his recent work. Perhaps his cognizance of official Nashville freezing him out led Cash to select the most ambitious slate of songs to cover yet on 2003's "The Man Comes Around." The unlikely specters of Cash versions of lyrics by Roberta Flack, Depeche Mode, and Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails are all on offer here. "The Man Comes Around" very well could be Johnny Cash's last studio recording. Physically, he continues to deteriorate, and the recent death of his longtime wife June Carter Cash doesn't bode well for his continued recording either. That said, Cash's last recording in many ways could be the finest of the "American" collaborations between him and Rubin, or even of his career.

Cash's version of Trent Reznor's "Hurt" pierces the soul, brings the listener closer to God, and fills one with anger if one thinks about it long enough. How is it that a music industry capable of producing such art inundates us with such unmitigated garbage so much of the time? How could Nashville make Johnny Cash work so hard for relevance in his last days, all the while pimping interchangeable performers like Shania Twain, the Dixie Chicks, and a seeming battalion of soft-palmed Walmart Cowboys with brand new Stetsons and commensurately callow and shallow lyrics? The industry spit on Johnny Cash by shoving him into retirement. But he has exacted his revenge, outperforming the lot of them even on his deathbed. He is the best of America, and his music is appropriate for anyone seeking to understand what independence and freedom are really all about. ■

Anthony Gancarski has written about music for numerous national publications, including URB and Spin magazines.

BOOKS

[*Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters*, ed. Carla Kaplan, Doubleday, 880 Pages]

Harlem's Old Rightist

By Marcus Epstein

ZORA NEALE HURSTON is one of the multiculturalist and feminist Left's favorite authors. Hurston is best known as a leading member of the Harlem Renaissance during the 1920s and '30s, whose books like *Jonah's Gourd Vine* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God* were considered some of the best works written by a black author. During the '40s and '50s, she fell into obscurity, and her works were largely forgotten after her death in 1960. A 1975 cover article about her by Alice Walker in *Ms.* magazine and a biography written in 1977 by Robert Hemeway revived interest in Hurston. Since then, there have been over a dozen books written on her, and her works have sold millions of copies.

What is largely ignored and forgotten is that Hurston was a staunch conservative. She bitterly denounced Reconstruction, the New Deal, and Communism. She supported Robert Taft's 1952 presidential run, Joe McCarthy through the Army-McCarthy hearings, and even worked on George Smather's controversial campaign against Claude "Red" Pepper. Most perplexing to her leftist admirers is her opposition to the Supreme Court's famous *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregation ruling in 1954. Nearly all her articles dealing with these issues, published in magazines like *American Legion*, the *American Mercury*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*, have not been republished.

Most of Hurston's admirers ignore these facts or look at them as an aberration

and low point in her career. Robert Hemeway says Hurston was a "talent in ruins" when she wrote about politics and suggested her views were shaped because she was spiteful of her failures—"the politics of resentment" as some would say. A new collection of her personal letters, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters*, collected and edited by Carla Kaplan, however, shows a very different picture of Hurston's political outlook.

While Kaplan is clearly not sympathetic to Hurston's views, which she dismisses as "reactionary," she admits "that there was an underlying logic to her thinking" and that her "intolerance remained based in the fierce pride that had made her successful." Kaplan notices that Hurston had always resented the way that Communists tried to infiltrate the Harlem Renaissance and use the black artists to further their political agenda. Hurston also avoided making her books into political statements. One can look at all her letters up until the 1940s, and she rarely mentions racism. She wrote, "I hate talking about the race problem. I am a writer, and leave sociological problems to the sociologists." She was, however, very proud of her race and accordingly did not believe in self-pity. She criticized liberals who "seek out and praise characters of the lowest type and most sordid circumstances and portray the thing as the common state of all Negroes and end up with the conclusions that the whites, and particularly the Capitalist whites are responsible for this condition."

This patronizing attitude became pervasive in the New Deal, which she believed hurt blacks. Because of Roosevelt's policies, "crime in Harlem is rampant, and the police are helpless because the New Deal-promoted Negro Politicians immediately let out a scream that Negroes are being persecuted the minute a Negro thug is arrested." An example of this was the 1935 race riot in New York, which she witnessed. Communists instigated the riot, but, according to Hurston, "nothing was done about it because they had all pledged to vote for Roosevelt in the 1936 election. The

blame was hurled at the door of the capitalists who did not vote for Roosevelt."

With her vitriolic wit, she did not even spare Roosevelt upon his death. She wrote, "[T]hat dear, departed, crippled-up so and so was the Anti-Christ long spoken of. I never dreamed that so much hate and negative forces could be

HURSTON HAD A CLEAR AND WELL-THOUGHT-OUT **POLITICAL WORLDVIEW**. SHE CONSISTENTLY **STOOD UP FOR THE VALUES** OF PRUDENCE, THE INDIVIDUAL, AND THE COMMUNITY.

unleashed on the world until I wintered and summered under his dictatorship."

Hurston's opposition to the *Brown* decision was well reasoned and in many ways prophetic. While she opposed state-enforced segregation, she found the logic of the decision patronizing towards blacks. Because *Plessy v. Ferguson* already established that the schools had to have equal facilities, "if there are adequate Negro schools and prepared instructors and instructions, then there is nothing different except the presence of white people." She believed, "[S]ince the days of the never-to-be-sufficiently deplored Reconstruction, there has been current the belief that there is no great[er] delight to Negroes than physical association with whites." She viewed this attitude as "insulting rather than honoring" her race. To Hurston, "the whole matter revolves around the self-respect of my people. How much satisfaction can I get from a court order for someone to associate with me who does not wish me near them?"

Hurston admired Robert Taft, who, when asked if he would forcibly desegregate schools if elected president responded, "No. The president of the United States is an executive, elected to carry out the laws made and provided, not to make laws himself. There is nothing in the Constitution that would give me the power to interfere and I would not do so. If it was there, I would follow the law." She supported this stance because "if you turn an executive loose to go outside the law in your favor on Monday, you have also given him the

power to go outside the law on Thursday against you."

She believed that it was possible that *Brown* would have a grave impact on the Constitution that many did not realize. While the South was "being frantic over the segregation ruling, it had better keep its eyes open for more important

things." The ruling on segregation launched a trial balloon for those who favored judicial activism: "[a] relatively safe one, since it is sectional and on a matter not likely to arouse other sections of the nation to the support of the South. If it goes off fairly well, a precedent has been established. Govt. by fiat can replace the Constitution."

In her letters, Hurston said she wished to write an article on foreign policy, but there is no record of such an article. She did, however, say a good deal about foreign affairs in various letters. While she supported rooting Communists out of the federal government and academia, she was critical of the war in Korea and American support for the French in Indochina because she did not see the battles in Asia as solely driven by Communism. Rather, she saw the Communists "merely taking advantage of the known anti-Anglo-Saxon feeling in Asia and the Near East." With the Asians possessing modern arms and technology, "just setting to beat them down as in the Boxer Rebellion is no longer feasible, as Korea has demonstrated." The Asians were not going to give up easily, and because "we ourselves have no colonies there is no sense in trying to maintain it for others."

Admittedly, Hurston's views were not always consistent. In some letters she denounced the Fair Employment Practices Committee, while she endorsed Robert Taft for his support of it in others. In November 1945 she heaped praise upon Harry Truman, yet less than a year later she called him a monster

whom she would always consider "nothing else but the BUTCHER OF ASIA" for dropping the atomic bomb on Japan. Despite these few aberrations, Hurston had a clear and well-thought-out political worldview. She consistently stood up for the values of prudence, the individual, and the community against the federal government, demagogues, and victimization.

Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters deals with far more than just the politics. In the over 600 letters in this volume, Hurston discusses literature, music, anthropology, and often just gossip. She corresponds with such notables as Langston Hughes, W.E.B. DuBois, Max Eastman, Franz Boas, and Carl Sandburg. In compiling this volume, Kaplan has done a great service by showcasing the private thoughts of a great novelist and political thinker. ■

Marcus Epstein is a student at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Va.

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[*Voucher Wars: Waging the Legal Battle over School Choice*, Clint Bolick, Cato, 277 pages]

School Choice and the Courts

By Daniel J. Flynn

MORE THAN FOUR decades ago, economist Milton Friedman outlined a plan for the government to issue parents vouchers for the purpose of sending their children to the school of their choice. "It would meet the just complaints of parents that if they send their children to private non-subsidized schools they are required to pay twice for education—once in the form of general taxes and once directly," the future Nobel Prize winner wrote in *Capitalism and Freedom*. "It would permit competition to develop. The development and improvement of all schools would thus be stimulated."

Formulating the idea of school choice would prove easier than putting that idea into practice. In *Voucher Wars: Waging the Legal Battle over School*

Choice, Clint Bolick details the protracted legal battle to win for local communities the right to grant vouchers to parents who opt for private rather than public education for their children. As an attorney immersed in this decade-plus courtroom war, Bolick is certainly the right man to write this book. Along with his colleagues, Bolick litigated more than a dozen cases involving vouchers. His legal odyssey passed through such diverse locales as Ohio, Puerto Rico, and Vermont, and culminated in a victory before the Supreme Court in last year's *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* decision.

"The road from a Saturday hearing in a steamy Madison courtroom in August 1990 to the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court on June 27, 2002, was a long and arduous one," Bolick writes. In Wisconsin, Bolick represented Polly Williams, a welfare mother turned state legislator. Proving that politics makes strange bedfellows, Williams, who harbored suspicions towards whites, Republicans, and the Catholics running many of the local private schools, "mixed a dose of Milton Friedman and a dose of Malcolm X and came up with the nation's first urban school choice plan." Shunned by tradi-

tional allies, Williams found an unlikely friend in Bolick, a libertarian legal activist.

Bolick's enemies proved an even stranger lot. In Tallahassee, Bolick knew he was in for rough times when the legal advocate for the anti-school-choice forces emerged from the chambers of Judge "Bubba" Smith prior to court proceedings. Smith, who refused to recuse himself after denying allegations of his son's pending nuptials to the daughter of a high-ranking official of the teachers' union, would issue an opinion taken "verbatim" from the teachers' union. Later, Judge Smith's son would indeed marry the daughter of the union bigwig, leaving Bolick to comment, "I guess we had stirred up a romance after all." A higher court would subsequently rule that Smith had become an advocate in the dispute he was supposed to be adjudicating, throwing him off the case.

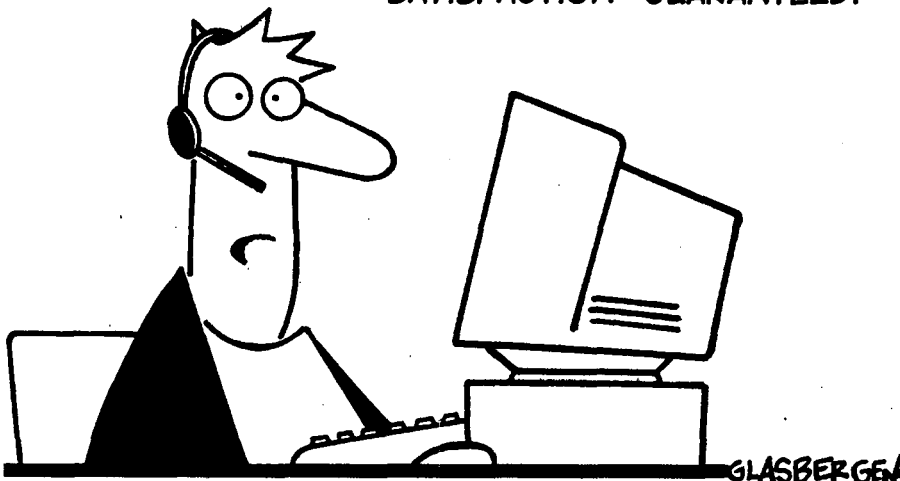
Just as school choice attracted a peculiar coalition of proponents (inner-city blacks, Catholics, conservative policy wonks), it inspired a diverse opposition (doctrinaire libertarians, atheists, union leaders). While self-interest explains the National Education Association's opposition to vouchers, serious questions have arisen about school choice in other quarters. Will voucher programs make private schools more like public ones? Will school choice drain even more money into a schooling abyss? Will government regulations follow government dollars?

While Bolick largely dodges these important questions, he effectively dismisses the libertarian argument that government disengagement from education is the only solution. "[I]t is more important to get *something* going than to await the ideal," *Voucher Wars* contends. In other words, it is dumb to sacrifice the good for the perfect. Bolick adds, "what really mattered to me was getting kids out of bad schools and into good ones." This common sense approach is what broadened the appeal of vouchers beyond the realm of theoreticians and policy gurus.

While supporters of school choice will find much to cheer about, portions

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of *Voucher Wars* will probably test the neutral reader's patience. Bolick's habit of name-dropping wealthy supporters of school choice makes certain passages read like donor "thank you" letters. The

four times more pupils than the Windy City's Catholic schools but 300 times the number of administrators. Requiring prospective teachers to learn how to teach, rather than to learn what they'll

schools, the courts have been enemy territory for the Right for a long time. If not a blueprint for others to follow, *Voucher Wars* is at least evidence that right-leaning legal arguments can win.

"Our present school system," Milton Friedman declared in 1962, "far from equalizing opportunity very likely does the opposite." Friedman's plan to alleviate the educational woes of the early '60s—which differ from today's problems only in scale—was breaking up the education monopoly and allowing for choice. It took 40 years, but thanks to the tenacity of Clint Bolick and his cohorts, the U.S. Supreme Court finally recognized the right of local communities to put into action Friedman's ideas providing competition in education. ■

Daniel J. Flynn is the author of Why the Left Hates America: Exposing the Lies That Have Obscured Our Nation's Greatness.

BURDENSOME FEDERAL REGULATIONS, AS WELL AS BUREAUCRATS LOOKING TO SPAWN THEIR OWN KIND, HAVE DERAILED EDUCATION FUNDING FROM TEACHING TOWARD BUREAUCRACY.

numerous genuflections to foundations and wealthy benefactors would have found a more suitable home in the acknowledgements section. The reader's interest is also a casualty of the author's deference to annoying lawyerly collegiality when describing courtroom adversaries. We learn that People for the American Way's Steve Green is "a pleasant enough guy," while legal nemesis Bob Chanin is an "ethical lawyer" who "represents his clients with zeal." Who cares?

Bolick is at his best when outlining the arguments for school choice—legal, moral, utilitarian, and otherwise. "No one views a Pell Grant used at Georgetown University or Yeshiva University as primarily advancing religion," the author argues, yet similar aid programs aimed at primary education are somehow deemed in violation of the Constitution. While the education monolith in grades K through 12 is an international laughingstock, "America's post-secondary system of education—the world's envy—is characterized by widespread school choice."

School choice, the author recognizes, is not the cure-all for America's education problems. Even if school choice were to become universal, impediments to learning would remain for many children. Pouring more money into failing schools inverts market principles by rewarding failure. Burdensome federal regulations, as well as bureaucrats looking to spawn their own kind, have derailed education funding from teaching toward bureaucracy. Chicago's government schools, Bolick notes, contain

be teaching, guarantees ineptitude. Bolick points out, "Albert Einstein would not be allowed to teach physics under teacher certification requirements in most states."

With judges overturning a popular mandate barring illegal immigrants from the welfare rolls, discovering a Constitutional right to privacy, and, most recently, decreeing illegal the voluntary saying of the Pledge of Allegiance in public

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Bring Back the Duel

By the time you read this, I'll be in deepest Devon playing cricket. Yes, it's a slow game, played over a whole, languid afternoon, with a long tea break and the odd

streaker interrupting the salubrious proceedings. It is an English ritual like no other, where good sportsmanship is all important and where corked bats are as rare as English sunshine. I picked up cricket late in life and am still unfamiliar with the all the rules, but if one keeps one's eye on the ball, one gets along just fine.

Amateur cricket still requires all-white outfits, swearing is a no-no, and the opposite team claps as one comes in to bat. I play two matches a year: one in Devon, in a private ground that belongs to a friend, and one at Badminton, the seat of the Duke of Beaufort, whose team I represent against the village outfit. In all the time I've played, running close to 15 years, I have never heard a swear word or rude remark—and I include the time when a friend of mine smoked a joint in the outfield, fell asleep, and lost our opponents the match. (Not by default—it wouldn't be cricket—but by the ball getting stuck under his immobile body.)

Mind you, this is private, privileged England, during the month of June, and the game is cricket, not soccer. As Peter Hitchens recently wrote in these pages, Britain is now a lawless place, with no-go areas for whites, dangerous drug gangs guarding their respective turfs, and aggressive hooliganism in the football terraces. If, say, Winston Churchill, who died in 1965, came back for a brief visit, he'd assume the Almighty sent him to the wrong place—Palermo at best, or Chicago during Prohibition.

In short, English life and manners ain't what they used to be. So much so that the great Paul Johnson used a whole *Spectator* column some years back to explain his astonishment and delight when a beautiful young woman offered him her place in the Tube. Such gestures, wrote Paul, always generate geniality, and other people notice and are edified. "There is no doubt that good manners are not a superficial activity. They serve a moral purpose. They are the outward and visible sign of an inner unselfishness, a readiness to put others first, and an exercise in self-restraint which defines the essence of civilization." Manners, of course, are the antithesis of brute force. They hide our real thoughts and intentions and subdue our natural belligerence.

The duel was a perfect example of good manners. Instead of brawling and murdering each other in the street,

untimely death. The putative insult to Thornhill was that Cholmley stomped him after a long evening of drinking at a pub. Just before he expired, Cholmley admitted, "This misfortune was my own fault and of my own seeking." That was a generous but quite untrue gesture; it was Thornhill who had issued the challenge, as proven by a letter from him, which was submitted as evidence at the subsequent trial.

I know, I know, we are living in the 21st century and all that, but I certainly wouldn't mind being challenged by such a civilized man, would you? Although Thornhill was found guilty, he didn't serve a day, and Cholmley's dying gesture was recognized as typical gentlemanly behavior. My recurring daydream is that the chivalric days of yesteryear have miraculously returned and I can save face with the weapons of my choice. Just imagine the fun: Christopher Hitchens vs. Sidney Blumenthal; Taki vs. Frum, Kristol, and Podhoretz (simultaneously); Starr vs. Clinton; Mailer vs. Wolfe; Buchanan vs. Rosenthal, and so on. It would beat dishing the dirt

SOCIAL DISINTEGRATION COMES WITH THE BREAKDOWN OF ETIQUETTE, AND NOWHERE IS THE COLLAPSE MORE VISIBLE THAN IN MERRY OLD ENGLAND.

duelists would fight—at times to the death—under the rules of a strict code, where cheating was forbidden and cowardice unacceptable. If ever there were a dignified way to settle accounts, the duel was it, and it brought out the best in man. My favorite is the duel between Colonel Richard Thornhill and Sir Cholmley Dering, which took place in 1711 and resulted in Sir Cholmley's

in print, and it would provide a great spectacle for those ink-stained wretches covering the Hill and the White House.

The last duel I know of took place between two men I was acquainted with. Both were gay, both in the closet, both talented, gracious, and gentlemanly. The Marquis de Cuevas, of ballet-fame, fought Serge Lifar, the Russian-born choreographer over artistic differences.

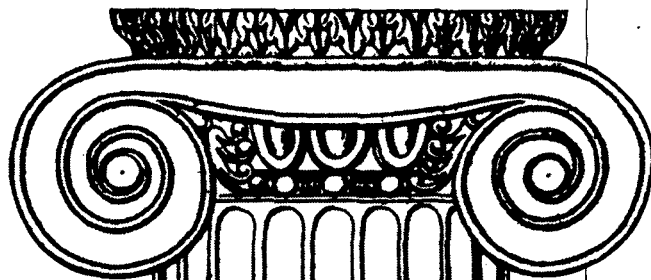
Cuevas was 72 at the time—1958—and Lifar was 53. Lifar had flung his scented handkerchief at Cuevas during the intermission of the Black and White ballet. They met at an estate 50 miles from Paris, and after a lot of weaving and bobbing, Cuevas pricked Lifar in the arm. Then Cuevas burst into tears and collapsed. The bleeding Lifar consoled him. They embraced, and it was all over. Now that's what I call a happy ending. But back to manners.

Nowadays it is normal to assume that etiquette is outdated. The enormous social changes, especially in relationships between men and women and the breakdown of the traditional family, have left people with dilemmas that the old certainties are ill-equipped to solve. (When a modern feminist screams like a fishwife and uses the F-word what is a gentleman supposed to do? Answer in kind? Punch her in the nose? Leave the room? The answer is none of the above. Do not ever come into contact.)

Manners, like the language, are fundamental means of communication and self-expression. Social disintegration comes with the breakdown of etiquette, and nowhere is the collapse more visible than in merry old England. I've been in some pretty rough places during my nightclubbing nights, but London makes me most nervous. At times it feels like anarchy. As Peter Hitchens has written, the cops stay inside the police stations, relying on cameras to record crimes. The bobby on his beat is a thing of the distant past. A lot of it has to do with PC. We in the West have abandoned an ethical basis for society in pursuit of equality of the races and creeds. We expect the government to solve problems that arise from lack of ethics.

When I was growing up in Greece during the war, the individual existed in the context of the family. Government did not have the means to provide for a person what the family best provided. There was no violence to speak of, no crime, no drugs, no vagrancy, no unbecoming behavior in public. Fathers made sure of it. Roger Scruton once wrote, "[T]he principal damage done by liberalism has come from its relentless scoffing at ordinary prohibitions and decencies." The liberal press and Hollywood have been the main culprits in transmitting liberalism's message. In the 1960s the evil duo decided that their mission henceforth would be to champion the deviant, the abnormal, the psychopath, while heaping scorn on the decent, the honorable, and the law-abiding. Family values were laughed all the way to the bank. Step forward all you bald, fat, cigar-chomping Hollywood types.

Now it seems it's almost too late to do anything about it. This is a culture that celebrates meanness as a virtue. It is also the swaggering, boasting, and flaunting of material things by the young, to the glorification of violence as the easy way to acquire these things, to the everyday speech pattern that uses the F-word as an article, an adjective, and a noun. They say that snobbery is really the tribute ordinariness pays to excellence. If that is so, we need more snobbery. It may not be the best way of acknowledging the finer values, but it is infinitely preferable to the pseudo-egalitarianism of denying that they exist. Cricket, however, is still a gentleman's game, and those who play it as amateurs mean to keep it that way. I will keep you posted, but in the meantime, if you plan a London trip, take along your brass knuckles. ■



UNCHAINING THE TRUTH ABOUT LIBERALISM IN AMERICA



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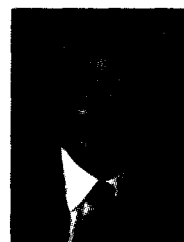
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PHIL KENT is president of the Southeastern Legal Foundation, a top conservative public interest law firm. He served as press secretary to U.S. Sen. Strom Thurmond and appears regularly on the Fox News Channel, CNN, MSNBC and other national shows. An award-winning columnist, his columns appear regularly in the Washington Times, Wall Street Journal and other national publications.



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